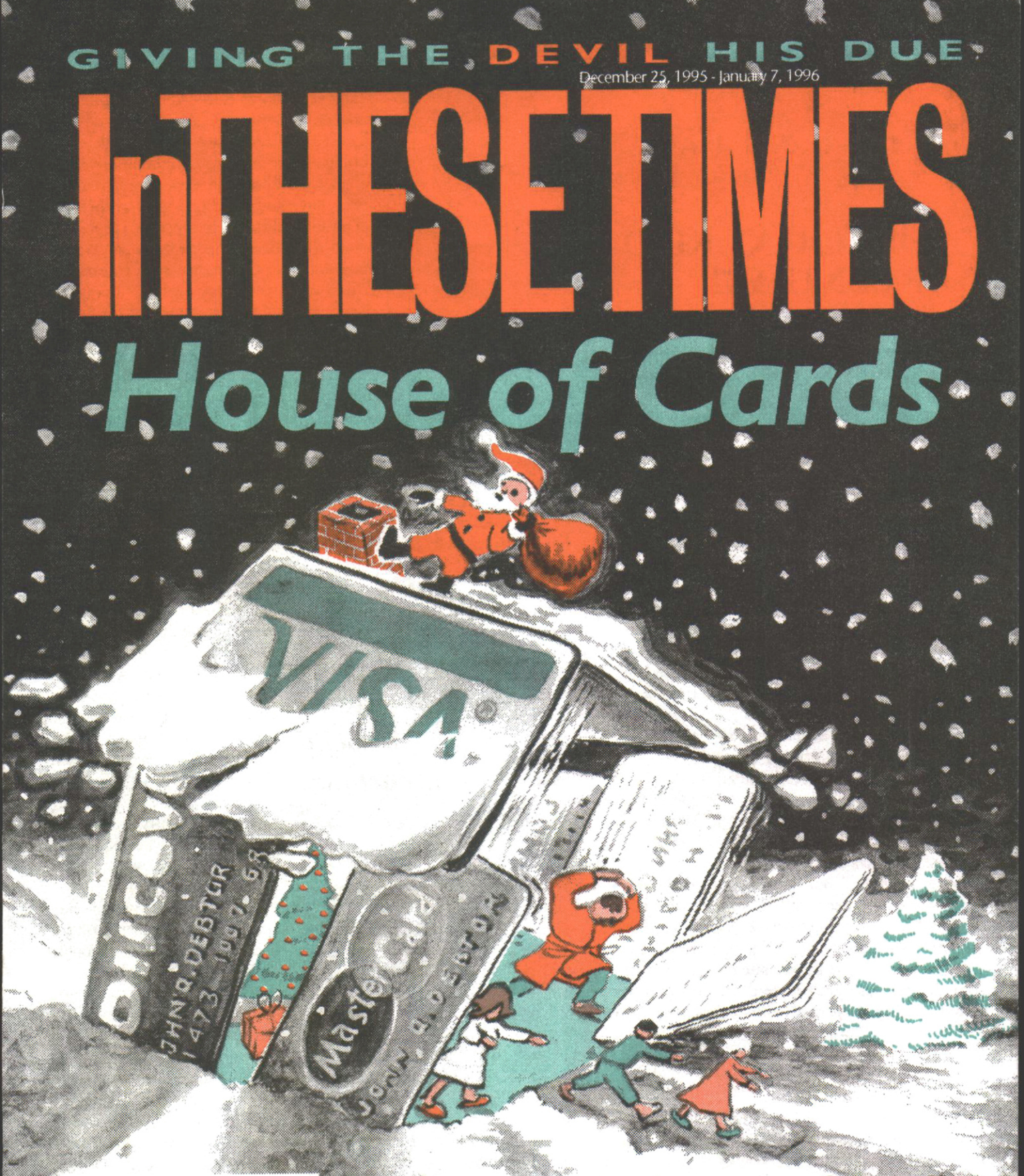
GIVING THE DEVIL HIS DUE

December 25, 1995 - January 7, 1996

In THESE TIMES

House of Cards



How America's usury-friendly economy is crushing consumers

By Joel Bleifuss

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EDITORIAL

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONTRACT

It's time for a new social contract, says John Sweeney, the recently elected president of the AFL-CIO. Needless to say, what he proposed at an early December meeting of a New York corporate, labor and nonprofit alliance scarcely resembles Newt's "contract." Newt's pact was supposedly between politicians and citizens interested in dismantling government, but it never discussed the massive private institutional power of business. Sweeney's ideas are more like Clinton's 1992 campaign social compact—though Clinton could never bring himself to make labor a key partner with business and government, as it is in most of Europe.

Wielding carrot and stick, Sweeney told employers that they face a choice: endure more militant union tactics, more angry workers and more social chaos, or else welcome labor's efforts to "build bridges" to management so that everyone can work productively together. "We need to build those bridges," he said, "because we want to be full partners with our employers, full participants in the economy, and full citizens of our society."

For nearly three decades after World War II, he argued, management and unions "had some unwritten rules—a social compact—that we lived by." With workers sharing in an expanding economy through rising wages, they bought more products and America "prospered because we prospered together." But that compact broke down in the '70s when business decided that "the best way to compete in the global economy was to drive down labor costs." Now businesses like Caterpillar, Citibank or the Gannett newspaper chain continue to thrive, but they do so at the expense of their workers. They have driven down wages, which no longer even keep pace with productivity growth. And so, Sweeney said, organized labor is going to lead a new campaign to organize workers and increase their earnings; but business executives need not worry: "Labor's victories can be your victories, too."

Sweet reason, however, is unlikely to win business execs back to a social contract. Sweeney is prepared to take two essential steps: bolster the ranks of unions and ratchet up the pressure on employers. Though the American corporate elite has periodically, and grudgingly, tolerated compacts with government and labor, as a marginal and subordinate partner, U.S. business has historically been extremely anti-union, far more so than management in Europe or Japan.

Employer hostility is rooted in this country's intensely free-market culture, which has spawned a business elite that feels little sense of obligation to a national community. But U.S. employers hold the upper hand because workers have not posed enough of a threat—through social disruption or political mobilization—to force business to seek peace through accommodation. Only when such threats are credible will executives even contemplate some compact. With the demise of the Soviet threat, capitalists can persuasively argue that there is no alternative to their demands, and until an appealing, credible alternative does emerge, they clearly have the upper hand and little reason to give it up.

Even if a popular threat does develop, the new global economy seriously undermines the prospect of sustaining a social compact in just one country. The new corporate globalism weakens both labor and the state and strengthens big business and free-market ideology. In today's world market, workers in advanced nations face many of the same austerity measures that the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have long imposed on developing countries. Even the social contracts of Western Europe are under assault. French workers have had to resort to several weeks of national strikes to defend their social security system against pressures to cut budgets for the sake of a European monetary system. (See "Is Paris Burning?" page 18.) American unions can only dream of mounting such actions, and unfortunately few can even entertain such dreams.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney offers America a social compact that Newt wouldn't recognize.

Any successful new social compact that protects the majority of people in industrial countries will have to be as much international as national. But even if a new national—or international—social compact could be wrested from corporations, it would have to involve more partners than labor, business and government. Environmentalists, advocates of minorities, feminists and community organizations, to name a few, deserve a place at the table. The contract would also have to go beyond expanding the economic pie and workers' share of it to tackle questions about how society organizes production, what goods are most important (and which ones most deplorable), and who shares in decision-making power at work. If working people are to be full partners in the economy and full citizens in society, as Sweeney argued, they need to share in those decisions. But if American workers hope to win such a social contract, they—along with workers around the world—will need far more social power. ◀

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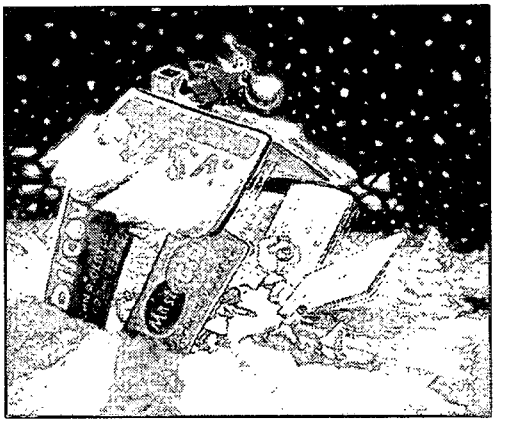
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LETTERS

Dead wrong

Salim Muwakkil's November 13 article, "The end of integration?," had within it the reason why liberal reformist approaches to the social and racial ills of the United States will never work. Regarding the O.J. Simpson trial, Muwakkil writes that "most African-Americans were cheering the fact that a black man had finally extracted a fair trial from a merciless criminal justice system."

Rubbish! Simpson was, in fact, another rich man who got away with murder (literally) in a country where everything is for sale—including the courts. It is absurd for blacks in this country to believe that social justice can be achieved without economic justice. Liberal tokenism puts a smile on a corrupt economic system that pits the working class against the poor and other workers based on race, sex and age. Under such a system, we can hardly be surprised to find people claiming "victory" in the acquittal of a murderer.

When the "left" figures out that our race problems are actually economic problems, maybe they might be able to win elections and help create a truly equal society.

W.F. Johnston
Tacoma, Wash.

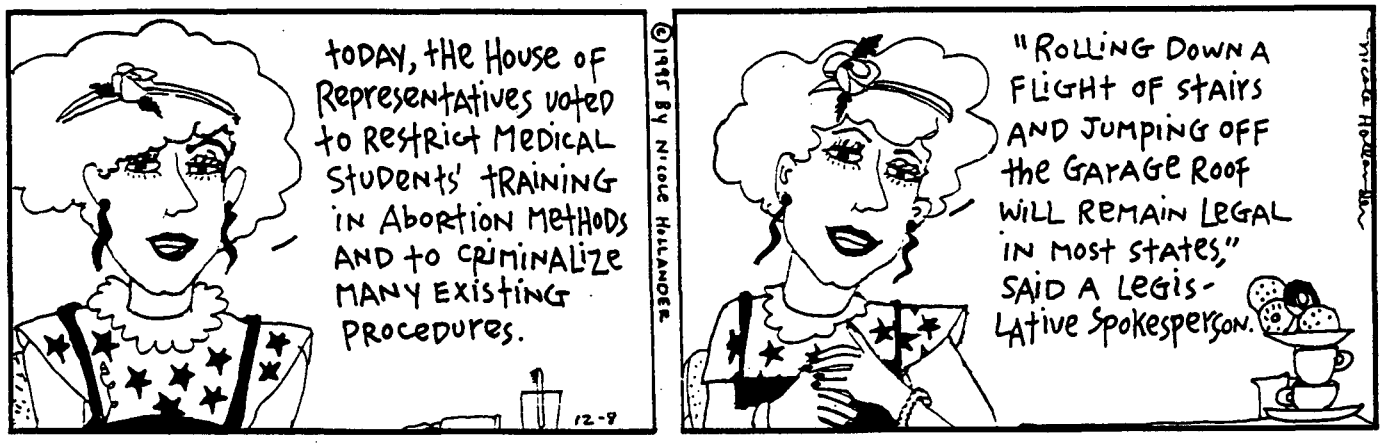
The rise of the house of labor

The rebirth of a strong and progressive labor movement is essential to the health of American democracy and the economic security of the American people. We therefore welcome the new leadership of the AFL-CIO elected at their historic convention in October and applaud their decision to dramatically increase the resources the union federation devotes to the organization of new workers. We believe the revitalization of the American labor movement can fashion a new politics of social solidarity and economic justice, and reverse the country's descent into the kind of mean-spirited selfishness that so discolors the contemporary political scene. An American labor movement now rededicated to the principles which once inspired millions promises to act boldly in the interests not only of its own membership, but of the vast majority of the American people. It is the most heartening development in our nation's political life since the heyday of the civil rights movement a third of a century ago.

For most people living standards have stagnated or declined for more than two decades. Recent increases in corporate profitability and productivity have failed to reduce economic insecurity or the growing disparities of wealth and income that have "Brazilianized" so much of the social structure. Working people of every description—white collar and blue, high tech and low, immigrant and American-born, men and women, white, black and brown—have been downsized and disenfranchised by a corporate elite that has lost all sense of social responsibility, except as an exercise in public relations. The deplorable and depressing state of race relations in America is only the ugliest sympton of the resentment, paranoia, and meanness that breed naturally in an environment of pervasive economic insecurity.

In this dismal context, the wave of hope and energy that has begun to surge through the AFL-CIO offers a way out of our stalemate and defeatism. The commitment demonstrated by newly elected president John J. Sweeney and his energetic associates promises to once again make the house of labor a social movement around

SYLVIA — by Nicole Hollander



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which we can rally. It is indeed time to "block the bridges" against all those who stand in the way of a humane and democratic society. As intellectuals, educators, and professionals we want to play our part in helping realize the promise of October. We extend our support and cooperation to this new leadership and pledge our solidarity with those in the AFL-CIO dedicated to the cause of union democracy and the remobilization of a dynamic new labor movement.

Jeffrey Abramson
Ann Banfield
Robert Bellah
Paul Berman
Julian Bond
Natalie Zemon Davis
Eric Foner
Betty Friedan
Herbert Gans
Mary Gordon
Robert Heilbroner
Christopher Jencks
Alfred Kazin
Randall Kennedy
Jonathan Kozol
J. Anthony Lukas
Harold Meyerson
Katha Pollitt
Richard Rorty
Arthur Schlesinger Jr.
Carol Stack
Cornel West
Stanley Aronowitz
Derrick Bell
Marshall Berman
Barry Bluestone
Charles Capper
Barbara Ehrenreich
Steve Fraser
Henry Louis Gates Jr.
Todd Gitlin
Bennett Harrison
Russell Jacoby
Jacqueline Jones
Michael Kazin
William Kornblum
Nelson Lichtenstein
David Montgomery
Katherine Newman
Michael Rogin
Lillian Rubin
Theda Skocpol
Michael Walzer

Shadow play

No, Scott McLemee is not a racist because he believes Mumia Abu-Jamal killed Officer Daniel Faulkner. Yes, the essay by the Western Massachusetts Prison Issues Group folks is "long and rambling" ("Justice denied"/"The Mumia Manicheans," November 13). But how is McLemee's account of Mumia's case any more reliable than those of Mumia's defenders? Exactly where did McLemee learn that Mumia "glar[ed] at prospective jurors, threat[ened] the judge with violence and delivere[ed] long, rambling political speeches"? The *New York Post*?

McLemee would do well to watch "Date With Death: Mumia Abu-Jamal's Struggle for Life" (Black Bag Productions), a video produced for the BBC earlier this year. (Call 203-847-6721 for copies.) The interviews and re-creations shown therein are quite enlightening.

As the show notes, the prosecution claimed that Mumia fired his first shot into Officer Faulkner's back from 12 inches away. But the prosecution's expert couldn't find evidence of gunpowder on Faulkner's jacket in his tests. The shot must have been from further away, which casts major doubt on the prosecution's description of events and the weapons involved. The prosecution also claimed that Mumia, standing over Faulkner, was shot as the officer was falling—but Mumia was hit in the chest and the bullet traveled downward. How could Faulkner have fired from that angle as he fell?

The only witness who claimed that Mumia had a gun in his hand was the prostitute Cynthia White. McLemee makes no mention of the witness Dessie Hightower, who observed that White was not where she said she was.

Why does Mumia, in particular, need all this attention? Because Mumia is the only (known) political prisoner on Death Row. We cannot allow another Sacco and Vanzetti, another Rosenberg case, another political killing, to occur in this country. Should anyone at *ITT* have doubts about the existence of political prisoners in the United States, I suggest reading *Agents of Repression* by Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall (South End Press, 1990).

McLemee would do well to spend less time making fun of the sectarian left (an easy target), and spend more time on real research. He might find his "shadow of a doubt" is just that; a shadow, not a thing of substance.

Jason Schulman
International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Democratic Socialists of America
Hartford, Conn.

Scott McLemee replies: *The point of my essay was not to skewer the sectarian left, but to show how both the supporters and opponents of Mumia Abu-Jamal have turned a complex criminal case into a simplistic morality play. As I have argued at every point in this debate, Abu-Jamal clearly deserves a new trial in which all the evidence—both for and against him—can be weighed fairly. Unfortunately, his supporters seem content to review only the material that is favorable to his case, especially* Live from Death Row, *Abu-Jamal's collection of essays, and* Race for Justice, *the book by his attorney Leonard Weinglass.*

As for my sources, after reading Weinglass' book and Abu-Jamal's writings, I examined every major article on the case published in British and American newspapers over the past year, plus whatever my poor French could make out from Le Monde. *Then I did something few Mumia supporters would think necessary: I looked at old issues of Philadelphia newspapers. Those contemporaneous accounts of the trial suggest that Abu-Jamal did himself no favors in court. In 1982, his behavior was—perhaps understandably—desperate, confused and self-defeating.*

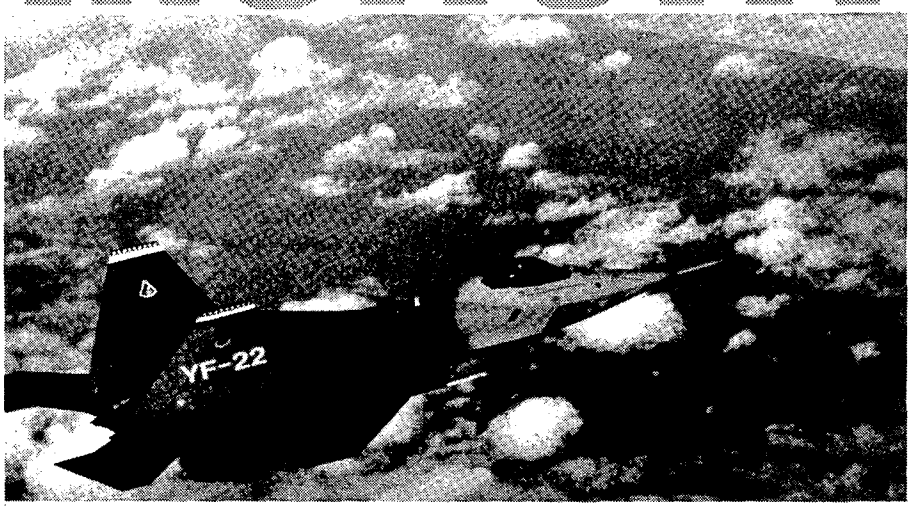
Today, on the advice of his lawyer, he refuses to discuss what happened on the night he ran into Officer Faulkner on a street in Philadelphia. Make of that what you will. But for my part, it seems pointless to write another word on the matter—unless, of course, Mumia himself wants to answer some hard, but fair, questions.

Correction

In the story "East Timor's tremors," ("In Short," November 27) several errors were introduced during the editing process. In fact, only a few dozen young East Timorese demonstrated during the November 1994 APEC summit. That demonstration was followed by a riot in which more than a thousand participated. Also, it was the attempt by Indonesian officials to arrest a pro-independence activist at his home in Dili that spurred rioting this past September. The activist escaped and sought refuge at a convent, where he was arrested a few days later. We regret the errors.

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InSHORT



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

The CIA's recent admission that Soviet double agents used the agency to feed misinformation to U.S. officials dealt yet another blow to the reputation of America's espionage agencies. But the news does even more damage to the conventional wisdom of how the United States won the Cold War.

In the triumphal interpretation corroborated by nearly every Reagan-era memoir, the Soviet Union collapsed under the strain of trying to keep pace with U.S. military spending. Former Secretary of State George Shultz argued in *Turmoil and Triumph* that when U.S. military strength "was built up to a point where our Soviet rivals recognized they could not match us ... then came the turning point." But it now appears that the Soviets deliberately supplied intelligence that prolonged the U.S. military buildup. A report released December 8 by CIA Director John Deutch revealed that from 1986 on, the KGB supplied information that led the United States to spend more on defense, and in particular to buy expensive weapons systems like the F-22 Advanced Tactical Fighter.

After Aldrich Ames helped the KGB destroy America's spy network in 1985, Soviet double agents began feeding the agency phony information that wound up in reports sent to the Pentagon and the White House. Senate Intelligence Committee staffers admitted last month that tainted intelligence justified a number of "bad decisions" that led to increases in defense spending, including the decision to fund the F-22.

Even before Ames' betrayal, the CIA was predisposed toward intelligence that would support increases in military spending. In the 1970s, the right-wing Committee on the Present Danger leaned on the agency to exaggerate the threat from Soviet military technology. And in 1981, when the F-22 first appeared on drafting tables at General Dynamics, the Reagan administration began pumping an extra $100 billion a year into weapons systems. But by the time George Bush entered the White House, the idea of a technologically superior Soviet Union had worn thin. With Gorbachev offering arms reductions and Congress clamoring for a peace dividend, the administration moved to scale back production of expensive programs like the F-22. In 1992, General Dynamics began looking for buyers for its plant in Fort Worth, Texas, where 20,000 jobs depended on the plane. It was at this point that the KGB stepped in to help.

At $61.2 million apiece, the F-22 was a costly replacement for the highly advanced F-117A stealth fighter, which had been designed to penetrate Soviet air defenses until well into the 21st century. Opponents of the F-22 argued that the $72 billion program was unnecessary since the former Soviet Union was in disarray and the cur-

Full spectrum

Michael Kinsley, the former "left" voice on CNN's nightly gabfest *Crossfire*, has left the show—though not his Beltway groove—to edit Microsoft's new online magazine. Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) wants CNN to replace the moderate Kinsley with a true lefty. "*Crossfire* needs a serious progressive, not a waffling centrist," says Sam Husseini of the New York-based media watch group. The group is recommending that FAIR-minded people contact CNN and urge the network to consider replacing Kinsley with a leftish wag such as *Vanity Fair* roving reporter and *Nation* columnist Christopher Hitchens, occasional *Time* essayist and social critic Barbara Ehrenreich, or one-time Texas railroad commissioner and full-time populist Jim Hightower. *Crossfire* can be reached at CNN, 820 First Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002 or through the comments line in Atlanta (404) 827-1500. —**Joel Bleifuss**

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APPALL-O-METER

IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES

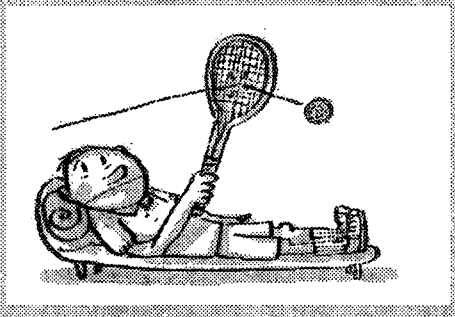
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Outfaxed 4.3

Why didn't the heady talk of '60s and '70s radicalism give rise to a real revolution? A news item in *New York* magazine suggests that the problem may have been simply a technological one: the revolution could not be faxed. "If the Young Lords had had fax machines and e-mail in our day," Puerto Rican radical Vicente "Panama" Alba recently told students at New York's Hunter College, "we would have brought the revolution for real."

Breast stop 7.2

In a typically misguided attempt to clean up their portion of cyberspace, officials at America Online (AOL) recently forbid their customers from using the word "breast" in chat rooms and on bulletin boards online. The decision to put the word on AOL's list of "vulgar" terms likely had little effect on the inhabitants of AOL's "Flirts Nook," who undoubtedly have a list of helpful synonyms for the term close at hand. But it did make it rather hard for breast cancer patients and survivors to discuss their medical conditions online. Facing complaints, the company quickly reversed its policy. The word "breast" can now, once again, be used on AOL, company spokeswoman Pam McGraw told the *Boston Globe*, "as long as it is used in an appropriate manner."



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Racquet envy 5.4

New Yorkers searching for personal fulfillment on the tennis court (and a quick way to empty out their wallets) might want to look into the services of Steven Turner, a $120-an-hour tennis pro who garnishes his serving tips with a touch of Freud. Among other things, the *New York Observer* reports, Turner contends that players hit the ball into the net because they are acting out "an unconscious desire to be held by the symbolic mother." He tells clients their games will improve once they "perfect a feminine arc and accept that people don't really want to win."

Stunned by a stupid statement? Nauseated by a noxious news story? Contact the Appall-O-Meter, c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Please enclose a copy of the appalling item.

rent generation of stealth aircraft could handle anything it might encounter in combat. But in the summer of 1992, the Air Force suddenly found a new argument for keeping the F-22. Air Force spokesmen claimed that the F-117A was vulnerable to new Soviet-made integrated air defenses and to SU-27 and MiG-29 aircraft. To ease Moscow's currency crisis, the Air Force warned, the Soviets would sell these weapons to buyers in the Third World, making the F-22 essential to winning small wars in the Middle East and elsewhere. KGB double agents furnished intelligence that supported this argument, exaggerating the capabilities of Soviet-made weapons systems. The CIA admits that its analysts were suspicious of these reports, but they passed them on anyway.

For the F-22, this was a new lease on life. In December 1992, Lockheed bet on the future of the plane by purchasing the Fort Worth plant from General Dynamics.

Did the Soviet Union hope to bankrupt the United States by encouraging it to build newer, more powerful weapons systems? Probably not. KGB strategists might have decided that exaggerating the advances in the next generation of Soviet aircraft would increase Gorbachev's leverage in arms talks with Bush. They also might have hoped that statements by alarmed Pentagon officials would make Soviet systems more marketable to foreign buyers. In either event, a rearmed America clearly held no terrors for KGB spymasters. If Reagan's buildup ended the Cold War, then the KGB deserves a share of the credit.

Lockheed Martin, the unwitting beneficiary of Ames' treason, plans to test-fly the F-22 in 1999. Officials say the only thing that can stop the plane now is budget instability. And despite the budget battle under way in Washington, Congress has approved $2.2 billion in spending next year for the F-22. Much of that money will go to the Lockheed plant in Marietta, Ga., the biggest employer in Newt Gingrich's congressional district.

—Nick Cullather

TURKEY CODDLING

Under cover of the rancorous debates over the budget, welfare reform and Bosnia, the Clinton administration has quietly slipped a controversial missile sale beneath congressional noses.

On December 1, the Defense Security Assistance Agency notified Congress about the proposed sale of 120 Army tactical missiles (ATACMS) to Turkey. Critics charge that the $88 million sale of the Army's most advanced ground-to-ground missiles (first used in the Gulf War and never before sold to any foreign government) will exacerbate tensions between Greece and Turkey, further threaten Turkey's beleaguered Kurdish population, and undermine

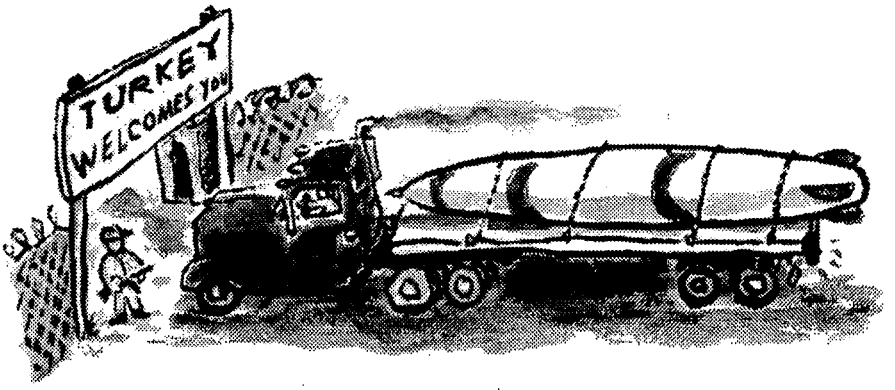
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the credibility of U.S. efforts to police the international arms trade.

With so much at stake, the administration's reasons for pushing the sale are unclear. But one thing is certain: Turkey holds considerable sway over U.S. arms-export policies. Not only is it America's second largest arms customer (logging a $2.2 billion tab in 1995), it is a key strategic partner. A supporter of American policy in the Middle East and a member of NATO, Turkey is also home to the air base that has been used to control northern Iraqi airspace and protect Iraqi Kurds since the end of the Gulf War. With Turkey's governing party locked in a tight election race, observers speculate that Clinton opted for a show of support for the current government over other considerations.

The sale is "a political plum," says Steven Goose of the Human Rights Watch Arms Project. "By sending our latest, most advanced arms to Turkey, the Clinton administration wants to send the message that it considers Turkey an invaluable, top-of-the-line ally." As *ITT* went to press, all indications were that this sale would pass through Congress without serious challenge.

The sale threatens to undermine the Missile Technology Control Regime, a Reagan-era treaty that restricts the export of missiles with a range of 300 kilometers or more.



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Although the American military is modifying ATACMS (pronounced "attack 'ems") to exceed the limit, the administration has promised that the export model will include software to hold the missile's range well below the treaty's restrictions. But such arguments may not prove convincing to other missile manufacturers such as the Chinese, who last year signed an agreement, at Secretary of State Warren Christopher's behest, not to export missiles that have an "inherent capability" of being modified to exceed 300 kilometers.

Even at the export model's maximum range of 165 kilometers, ATACMS are offensively oriented deep-strike weapons and likely to be perceived as a threat by Greece, Turkey's longstanding rival. Turkey insists the missiles are vital to counter the threat posed by several thousand tanks in nearby Syria, Iran and Iraq, but ATACMS are designed to take out soft targets such as soldiers or communications towers, and are virtually useless against armored tanks.

Meanwhile, the transfer also raises concerns among human-rights observers. Embroiled in an 11-year civil war with the Kurdistan Workers Party, Turkey has a history of turning American-made arms against both Kurdish troops and civilians. According to a June 1995 State Department report, the Turkish government has used U.S.-manufactured helicopters, fighters and armored personnel carriers in "the evacuation and/or destruction" of more than 1,000 villages and hamlets, displacing as many as 2 million people.

Under the Foreign Assistance Act, such human-rights violations are supposed to render countries ineligible for U.S. military aid or sales. Nonetheless, the United States currently provides Turkey with 80 percent of its arms imports, and, over the last 10 years, has supplied the country with $5.3 billion in military grants and loans—more money than it gives to any nation except Israel and Egypt. "There is no question that Turkey's human-rights record is very bad," Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe said at an April 4 hearing on military aid to Turkey. "That said, for us to base our policies solely on Turkey's human-rights record would be very shortsighted."

—Ashley Craddock

Burn, baby, burn

LAST MONTH PROTESTING DOCTORS GATHERED OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN MEDICAL Association's (AMA) San Francisco office and burned 25 AMA membership cards. The protest was part of an ongoing anti-AMA membership drive organized by the California Physicians Alliance, Consumers for Quality Care and Neighbor to Neighbor, which are asking doctors to protest the AMA's support for Republican plans to cut Medicare.



© 1995 TERRY LABAN

"Physicians are revolting because what the AMA is doing is revolting," says event organizer Jamie Court, director of the L.A.-based Consumers for Quality Care. "The AMA has teamed up with the insurance corporations at the expense of patients," Court charges. "If the for-profit HMOs that are taking over the marketplace and corporatizing health care are not able to give high-quality care, then we will have to explore other alternatives—alternatives that will turn the current health marketplace into a nonprofit delivery system rather than a Wall Street investment." —J.B.

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MEDIA WATCH

By Jennifer Gonnerman

Young and relentless

CounterPunch, the Washington-based newsletter edited by Alexander Cockburn and Ken Silverstein, has published an excellent behind-the-scenes look at the rapid ascent of *New Republic* writer Ruth Shalit. Only 25 years old, Shalit recently managed to make headlines with a 13,000-word article attacking the *Washington Post*'s affirmative action policies. Though Shalit made close to 40 factual errors in the story and had previously been caught plagiarizing three times, she remains one of Washington's hottest reporters. *CounterPunch*'s explanation for Shalit's success: She "moves along a path well trodden" by conservative writers such as Dinesh D'Souza, who parlayed his position at the right-wing *Dartmouth Review* into a career as a race-baiting intellectual. Similarly, Shalit's career started at Princeton's conservative student paper—a stint that quickly led to an associate editor job at *The New Republic* as well as writing assignments for *GQ* and the *New York Times Magazine*.

The next journalist to trod this path may be Shalit's younger sister, Wendy. In only her third year at Williams College, Wendy Shalit is already attracting attention in conservative circles—partly because *Commentary* has published her essays. In her most recent contribution to *Commentary*, "A Ladies' Room of One's Own," Shalit sneers at "radical feminists" and mocks life on her own "p.c." campus. As they did with Ruth Shalit, established conservative journalists are helping fuel Wendy's rise. Columnists at both the *Washington Times* and *U.S. News & World Report* have already praised the college junior's essays—offering yet another example of the right's impressive ability to cultivate young conservative writers.

Hell-evision

Imagine planting yourself on the sofa and watching more than 50 hours of local news broadcasts. Then imagine that the news broadcasts—videotaped in 35 states—are all from exactly the same night. Sound fun? Perhaps not, but this is exactly what Dr. Paul Klite and his team at the Rocky Mountain Media Watch recently did. Klite's conclusion: local news has degenerated to the point where its primary goal now seems to be titillation.

"Their function is not an informed public but an emotionally aroused audience that is susceptible to advertising," the report argues. "If an audience is well primed and conditioned, advertising propaganda will go down like a sugar-coated pill."

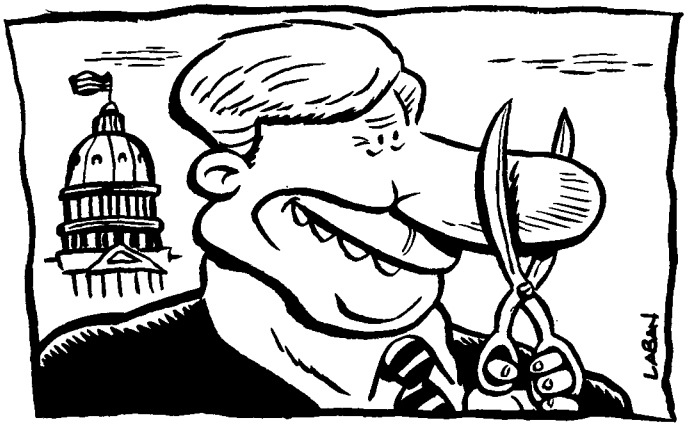
The pills may be sliding down pretty easily these days. Klite's survey of the September 29 news shows on 100 stations found that they devoted close to 30 percent of local news time to crime stories. And to hike up that arousal level, the crimes chosen were usually the most vicious: murder, assault and rape. Apparently, stories about poverty or work rate lower on the titillation scale. Stations dedicated less than 2 percent of news time to poverty issues and less than 2 percent to labor.

So what do we news consumers get instead? "Sumo baby." More than a quarter of the stations surveyed decided that the day's most important news included the birth of a Mississippi baby who tipped the scales at close to 15 pounds.

TOMORROW'S NEWS TONIGHT By Steve Brodner



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THE SPITEFUL CONGRESS

In its zeal to reduce wasteful federal spending, the 104th Congress has shut down the one agency that has worked most effectively to achieve those goals. The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS), which was established as an independent agency in 1964 to promote improvements in the regulatory procedures of federal agencies, was zeroed out of the budget and ceased to exist on October 31.

ACUS played a major role in the Clinton administration's efforts to increase government efficiency. Considering the agency's purpose and its track record, Congress' action seems more than a little irrational. It may have allowed members to claim they had cut another government agency and saved $1.8 million (ACUS' FY '95 budget), but the long-term cost in lost efficiency savings could be much greater.

In an effort to avoid costly battles over government regulations, ACUS began adapting alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes for federal use in the early 1980s. These processes use a disinterested third party to facilitate discussion and decision-making by affected parties to a dispute. In 1990, Congress affirmed these efforts by passing legislation encouraging agencies to use mediation and other ADR methods.

One particularly effective ADR process used at the federal level is regulatory negotiation (or "reg neg"). It has significantly reduced the amount of litigation that traditionally follows the drafting of congressionally mandated regulations in the cases where it has been used. The usual procedures had led increasingly to lawsuits by dissatisfied parties. Before reg neg, an estimated 80 percent of the rules drafted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were challenged in court, and 30 percent were substantially altered as a result. Rules drafted with reg neg—and a third of the 48 reg negs started so far have been conducted by the EPA—have provoked virtually no legal challenges because the inclusion of more points of view in the drafting process has resulted in better regulations.

The goal of a reg neg is to reach consensus on the text of a proposed rule. If consensus is not reached, issues in dispute will at least have been narrowed, and agencies will gain much information that will help them draft rules by themselves. Even without consensus on the final draft, relationships between the parties are usually improved; they tend to look at issues more collaboratively and work together better in the future.

Killing off ACUS will not mean an end to the use of ADR by federal agencies. "The federal ADR 'genie' is now indisputably 'out of the bottle,' " says Charles Pou, the last director of the ACUS dispute resolution program. But the spread of ADR in the government will certainly be slowed now that Congress has gutted the main engine for change. Since these collaborative processes give a voice to less influential groups in the decision-making process, the upshot will be to make federal bureaucracies less representative and and less accountable. So much for the Gingrich revolution.

—Anne Larson

IMPERIAL POLITICS

Few figures better symbolize the progressive politics of San Francisco than Dennis Antenore. A prominent land-use attorney, Antenore was a key player in the drafting and passage of San Francisco's landmark growth control law in 1986. Big money and the skyscrapers they build are not his cup of tea. Neither are big money politicians like Willie Brown Jr., the city's new mayor-elect. But Antenore supported Brown all the same.

Whenever Antenore grew uncomfortable contemplating the former assembly speaker's legendary ability to wrest favors from special interests like the tobacco lobby, he'd close his eyes and picture a scene in his head. "I would see Willie on the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, ripping Newt Gingrich apart," Antenore explains. Similar visions helped many progressives make their peace with Brown, who defeated the more conservative incumbent, Frank Jordan, in a December 12 runoff.

Deep in their hearts, San Francisco progressives know Brown will cater to downtown corporations more than they would like. But some progressives have a bigger picture in mind. They hope that Brown, forced from his high-profile assembly seat by California's new term-limits law, can draw desperately needed attention to the plight of urban America as mayor of San Francisco. As a symbolic national figure, Brown's appeal is undeniable. But what he'll mean for San Francisco is entirely unclear.

What most San Franciscans know of Willie Brown and how he wields power can be fit into a thimble. Though he has represented the city's east side in the assembly since 1964, Brown has always been the distant prince, earning respect from city residents for his ability to beat up on Republican governors and legislators in Sacramento. But in many ways, Brown's experience in

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Sacramento has little relevance in San Francisco, which harbors no Republican threat. And he will be stripped of the chief weapon he used to amass power during his 15 years as speaker: the campaign war chest he filled with donations from lobbyists and doled out to loyal Democratic colleagues.

Nevertheless, Brown may be planning to bring his imperial style to the city. Rumor has it that in the weeks before his election, he made backchannel calls to city supervisors urging them to derail electoral reform legislation that came before the board of supervisors on December 11. The board subsequently scuttled the reform, which would have replaced the current system of costly at-large elections with district elections, making candidates less reliant on big donors. The supervisors Brown reportedly contacted voted against the measure. With the defeat of district elections, the big money donors Brown knows so well in San Francisco will continue to wield their influence. And so, with a few phone calls, Brown can help favored candidates obtain vital campaign funds. (With Brown slated to fill two vacant supervisors seats, he is already well on his way to building a loyal board.)

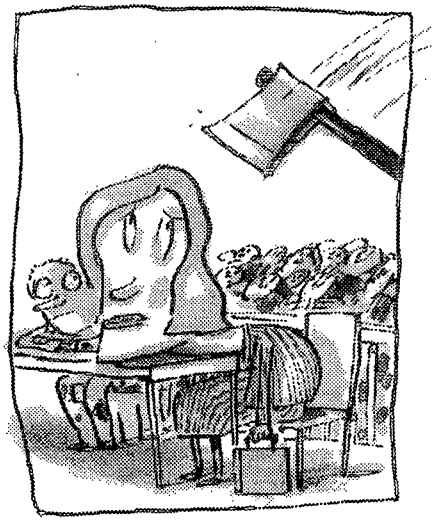
Of course, pliant supervisors can only provide so much assistance to the city's mayor; just ask outgoing Mayor Frank Jordan. Though Jordan generally had his way with the board, he was never able to assemble a viable electoral coalition out of the city's demanding micro-constituencies, which include labor unions, neighborhood activists and land-use reformers as well as the various groups organized around issues of race, gender and sexual orientation.

Brown, a notoriously impatient man accustomed to the sweeping powers of the state legislature, is also untested in corralling these stubborn horses of the city's politics. The question now is whether progressive activists will possess the independence to challenge Brown if he chooses to transplant the power politics of Sacramento to San Francisco.

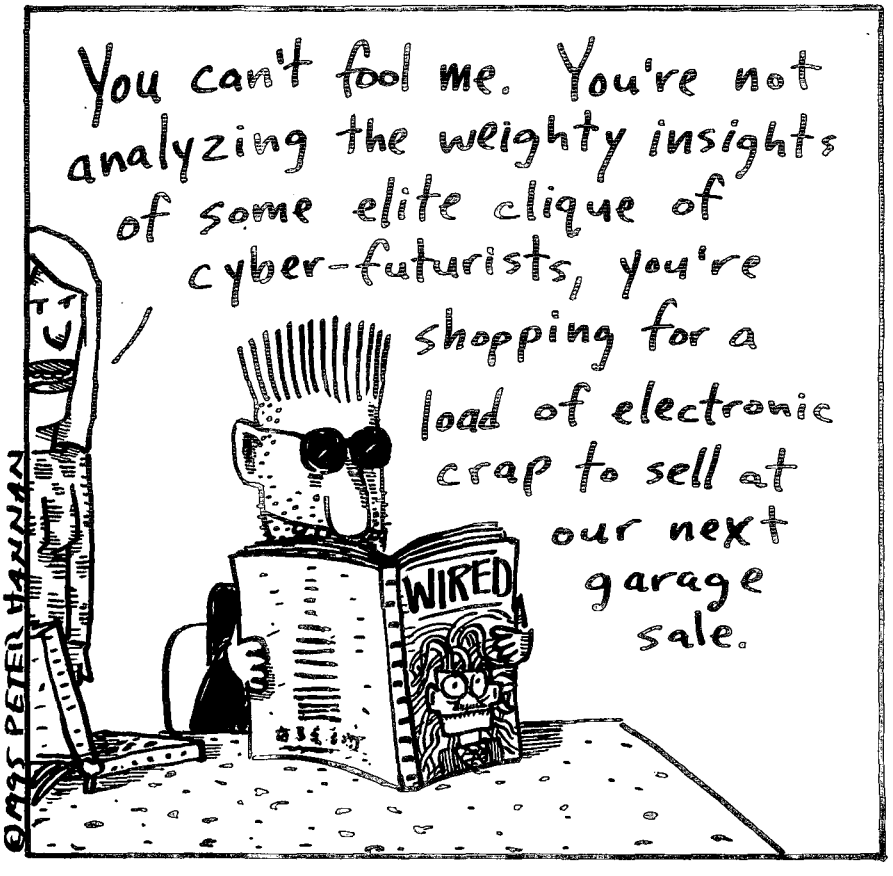
—George Cothran

A poor excuse for justice

THE CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR THE COMMERCE, JUSTICE AND State Departments has put the Legal Services Corp. on the chopping block. The federal agency, which provides legal aid to people unable to afford lawyers, would see its budget cut from $400 million to $278 million by the bill. (See "Law and disorder," November 27.) What's more, the new bill prohibits Legal Services lawyers from filing class-action lawsuits against negligent employers and government agencies. Though class-action suits comprise only 1 percent of the agency's total caseload, those cases are crucial, says Chicago legal aid lawyer Blair Craddock. "The only useful way to confront a government body that is failing to do something required by federal law is through class actions," she says. "But I don't see how anybody will be able to do that kind of work now. Private lawyers are not able to accept these cases because it is not possible to recover attorneys fees." The administration has said it will veto the bill because of these restrictions. —J.B.



THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH By Peter Hannan



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THE FIRST STONE

HOUSE OF CARDS

By Joel Bleifuss

Dick and Jane are average working-class Americans. They earn less than they did 20 years ago, and consequently they face a dilemma this Christmas. They have almost no money for presents, and their existing credit cards are maxed out. But Dick and Jane just received a new Chase Visa card in the mail. The card has a $2,000 credit limit and a 19.5 percent interest rate.

Dick and Jane decide they don't want Christmas to pass them by, so they whip out their plastic. Soon they've added another $2,000 to the $384 billion in outstanding credit card debt carried by Americans. If they make the minimum monthly payments required by Citibank, they will pay off their $2,000 debt by May 1, 2028. Through those years Dick and Jane will also have paid the bank's owners a total of $6,358.88 in interest fees.

One hundred years ago, Dick and Jane might have run up that crippling debt while shopping at a company store, keeping them in thrall to usurious employers. Today, credit cards are the company stores of the new economy. And they have created a new order of debt peonage, keeping Americans permanently in hock to the nation's high-flying bankers.

With U.S. wages stagnant or falling, low- and middle-income Americans are increasingly using credit cards to maintain their standard of living. It is impossible, of course, for cash-strapped Americans to borrow themselves into a higher income bracket. And eventually, this financial house of cards must come tumbling down.

But the financial institutions that help people construct these unstable debt structures see things differently. Thomas Layman, the chief economist at Visa U.S.A., recently told the *Wall Street Journal* that "when consumers hit a rough spot, they don't have to stop spending altogether as they did 10 years ago. That's the beauty of the card as a payment vehicle."

Though beautiful to bankers, credit cards have a dark side. In the United States 120 million people hold a total of 1.1 billion bank, retail and gas credit cards. About 89 million people in the United States carry a Visa or Mastercard, the two most popular credit cards. Of these cardholders—who own a combined total of 319 million Visas and Mastercards—30 million promptly pay off all charges. The other 59 million cardholders carry an outstanding balance from month to month. On average, each of these cardholders owes $3,900 on three or four cards that charge 18 percent interest.

Currently, Americans owe a total of $384 billion in outstanding debt on all major credit cards, 14 percent more than they owed at the beginning of the year. During the same period, people's income increased by only 3 percent. And that gap has created some serious problems. In the second quarter of 1995, the amount of credit card debt more than 90 days past due was 35 percent greater than the year before. Further, in October, consumer loan shark shops—outfits like the Money Store and American General Finance—reported a rise in defaults on consumer loans.

That news sent bank stocks tumbling and spurred concern among policy-makers. On Capitol Hill, Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-MA) responded by convening a forum that examined the hardship caused by the increasing consumer debt burden and the ominous implications for the national economy. "High debt could be hurting retail sales during a period that is crucial to the health of our economy," Kennedy said, in announcing the December 14 forum.

In testimony prepared for the forum, consumer advocate Ralph Nader renewed his call for the creation of "financial consumer associations" that would challenge the predatory practices of today's consumer finance companies. These nonprofit associations, which Nader has been advocating for 20 years, would educate consumers, lobby state and national legislatures for more progressive banking laws, and represent citizens in complex financial litigation.

The need for Nader's associations has never been more urgent. In recent years, the nation's consumer finance industry has become more sophisticated in extracting its pound of flesh—and credit card companies have had the sharpest knives. The companies have devised increasingly elaborate penalties to impose on cardholders. Even "good" consumers are paying a price. Every issue of *Bankcard Consumer News*, the newsletter of the Salem, Va.-based consumer group Bankcard Holders of America, is crammed with new credit card horror stories. Recently *Bankcard Consumer News* reported that Capital One Bank Visa, based in Richmond, Va., raised the interest rate on a cardholder—a woman who had a perfect payment record—to 24.9 percent because she increased the amount of debt that she owed on *other* credit cards. This is a regular practice at Capital One, which every six months runs credit reports on its 6 million

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customers to ferret out damning financial information.

Many banks now terminate cardholders who don't charge enough or who pay their balance promptly. Last June, Bank1One, of Columbus, Ohio, canceled the cards of 100,000 people because they weren't charging enough—after all, credit card bankers lose money on cardholders who don't go into debt.

But even as the industry sheds its unprofitable cardholders it aggressively seeks new marks. In 1994, credit card issuers mailed more than 2.5 billion solicitations to consumers. And in just the first quarter of 1995, the companies sent out 1.2 billion solicitations. At college campuses across the nation, Visa and Mastercard hire students to flog their cards to other students. Janice Shields, a former accounting professor at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania, looks back in disgust at the marketing tactics of the credit card companies. "They paid student organizations to set up tables in the student union," says Shields, who now works as a consumer banking analyst at Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law in Washington, D.C. "At Bloomsburg University we would have two or three credit card companies a day. And now they are in the high schools."

Federal Reserve Gov. Lawrence Lindsey, another speaker at Kennedy's forum, has also expressed concerns about the deluge of credit cards and the steady rise in consumer debt. "It is not appropriate for me to tell people not to use their credit cards as much," Lindsey told the *Wall Street Journal* in September, "but it is my responsibility to tell bankers not to put out so many solicitations [for new cards]."

But such solicitations work. According to the *Nilson Report*, a California-based financial newsletter, by the year 2000 Visa and Mastercard alone will have added another 107 million cards to the 319 million now in circulation. And in those five years the total outstanding consumer debt on the nation's two leading cards is projected to jump 60 percent, from $244 billion to $390 billion.

The banking industry defends its credit card practices by saying that the public's consumer debt is still manageable. Bankers point out that the current balance of $384 billion in outstanding credit card debt represents only one-third of the $1.02 trillion in total credit available to cardholders. With $636 billion in credit still open to the nation's consumers, bankers believe that significant leeway remains in the credit card market. As the *Journal* itself noted, even if Americans "do get strapped making those monthly credit card payments they have more untapped credit than ever before, in effect allowing them to borrow to pay for previous borrowing."

But despite what the *Journal* says, people can't borrow themselves out of debt, especially when they're paying 24 percent interest. Banking analyst Shields says the time has come for "consumers to fight back and demand a cap on interest rates." At one time state usury laws set tough limits on predatory lending rates. But those state laws were preempted in 1980, when Congress passed the Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act, which abolished usury ceilings. Although that law allowed states to supersede the federal statute and set their own usury ceilings, few have done so.

Arkansas is one that did. It has the nation's toughest usury law. That law has been defended time and again—most recently in 1990, when citizens disregarded Gov. Bill Clinton's calls for deregulation and voted overwhelmingly to keep their usury ceiling intact. Arkansas will not let credit card interest rates climb more than 5 percent above the Federal Reserve's discount rate, the rate at which banks borrow money from the Fed. With the current discount rate at 5.25 percent, interest rates on loans in Arkansas are limited to just 10.25 percent. But state banking laws do not apply to credit cards issued by out-of-state banks. In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that credit card issuers based in loosely regulated states were free to disseminate their cards, along with their toothless banking laws, across the nation.



Opponents of usury laws contend that such regulations are market barriers that deprive high-risk borrowers of access to credit. Kathleen Keest, who follows consumer lending for the National Consumer Law Center in Boston, says this argument is bunk. In *The Cost of Credit: Regulation and Legal Challenges*, Keest writes that "reasonable usury statutes undoubtedly benefit more borrowers by limiting ... interest rates than they harm by restricting credit."

Bankers also argue that usury laws are unnecessary because federal law already forces the full disclosure of credit

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terms. And, they claim, Americans should be free to decide for themselves what credit terms are appropriate for them. To that argument, Keest counters that in a country like the United States, where, according to the Department of Education, 40 percent of the population is functionally illiterate, "the concept of disclosure begins to lose meaning."

But attempts to control the growth of the consumer credit market pose serious risks. Deficit spending by families like Dick and Jane's helps fuel the national economy. And if lower-income borrowers curtail their spending, the consequent loss of economic stimulus could cause the nation to spiral into a recession or worse. In a sense, Americans are damned if they stop buying on credit—which would cause a national recession—and damned if they don't.

Lindsey, at the Federal Reserve, has begun to issue such warnings. In a talk last January to the National Economists Club, Lindsey warned that the current expansion of credit card debt "was unsustainable" and he predicted "a sharp slowdown in consumption and overall economic activity" in the "not too distant future." He concluded his speech this way: "Grantors of consumer credit by now have collectively taken on a macroeconomic responsibility they did not seek. The evidence indicates that the old liquidity constraint [that one did not spend beyond one's means] that used to discipline household consumption behavior has been replaced by a new constraint—the credit card limit. To the extent that this is the case, the willingness of the industry to extend credit in ever greater quantities will determine in a major way the duration of the current consumer spending binge, the ultimate extent to which consumers become overextended, and therefore the depth of the next macroeconomic downturn."

And that could be very deep indeed. In 1979, a year of double-digit inflation, Jimmy Carter urged Americans to stop using their credit cards and help him fight inflation. Within days the White House was inundated with cut-up cards. As William Greider wrote in *Secrets of the Temple*, this action, combined with new Federal Reserve policies that hiked interest rates and shrank the money supply, precipitated the 1980 recession. Within three months, the GNP had shrunk by 10 percent, and the United States had entered the worst recession since the Great Depression. Of course, at the time the number of credit card holders was vastly smaller than today.

The unprecedented volume of consumer debt owed by working Americans is also—and no less disturbingly—a key factor in the upward transfer of wealth the country has experienced in recent years. "Credit cards are a useful way of telling the story about the growing gap between rich and poor in America," says Tom Schlesinger, director of the Southern Finance Project, an independent research center that monitors financial markets. "Lower- to middle-income households are just being deluged in debt. And that is both a cause and a consequence of wage-income stagnation. As more and more people see their income stagnating, they are having to resort to more and more borrowing." And in the process, they're becoming poorer and poorer.

This year total consumer credit debt payments reached a record 19.8 percent of after-tax income. (Visa and Mastercard alone received a whopping 7.5 percent of Americans' after-tax income.) And the nation's debt burden is not distributed evenly. Lower-income Americans bear a disproportionate percentage of this load. According to the Federal Reserve, the share of the nation's consumer debt owed by households with annual incomes under $30,000 rose from 20.6 percent in 1989 to 30.9 percent in 1992, and is undoubtedly higher today.

We are in danger of becoming a nation of paupers, who—in addition to signing up for ever more loans—are willing to compound our problems by signing off on the political process that provides the one real chance to set the terms of our economic future. Should we fail to act, the majority of Americans will face a bleak future. If the trends of the last 15 years continue, as they show every sign of doing, by 2004 the richest 3.3 percent of Americans will receive 30.6 percent of the national income, while the bottom 96.7 percent of the citizenry will receive only 69.4 percent of the national income.

One way people might gain control of their domestic finances is not through reform of current financial institutions but through the creation of new ones. Shields, at Nader's office, says she'd like to see the establishment of cooperative consumer banks. "The banking industry has pushed for interstate banking and now that we have it, I think we should use that to consumer advantage," says Shields. "Why can't we form a national consumer bank—a bank that would compete with the Bank of America and First Chicago, both of which charge customers to use a teller? I think it would work." If it doesn't, not much else will. ◄

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UNIONS

Year of the Cat

The failed two-year strike at Caterpillar reveals a need to strengthen labor's culture of solidarity.

By David Moberg

Jack Hayes was "angry and disappointed" with the deal Caterpillar offered to end a 17-month United Auto Workers (UAW) strike against the heavy-equipment maker. It was in some ways worse than the proposal that his union turned down in November 1991, at the start of Cat's brutal four-year war against its factory workers.

As he thought of his 29 years as a welder, countless hours on "quality team" and "employee satisfaction plan" committees, and two long strikes in four years, he still couldn't believe the company would "treat us that way." Like nearly everyone else in his local, he voted on December 3 to reject the offer. But with strike pay draining its treasury as it steadily lost leverage, the UAW had decided to end the strike, whatever the vote.

It was clearly no victory, but Larry Solomon, the president of Hayes' local union in Decatur, Ill., says the vote made his members happy. "It was therapy when they got to reject that proposal," he says. Now union leaders and workers, weary but more sophisticated after years of conflict, have to figure out new ways to win an acceptable contract.

Since they were striking over unfair labor practices, workers were at least entitled to return to their jobs, even though the company operated during the strike with replacements, salaried personnel and the roughly one-third of the union's 13,000 members who crossed picket lines. But Cat adamantly refused to grant even a hearing before an arbitrator for the more than 150 workers fired in recent years for offenses as trivial as singing at work or refusing to eat a company-provided doughnut.

Cat has signaled that it will treat returning strikers harshly. The rejected proposal, which the company will likely impose unilaterally, drastically reduces the number and rights of union representatives. Foremen, who currently cannot prohibit a worker from filing a grievance, will have the power to refuse to acknowledge a worker's grievance on the grounds that it is "frivolous." Earlier this year, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) regional office conducted hearings on proposed temporary and permanent standards, and the NLRB office issued a complaint that the standards were too broad and unlawful. Discussions among Cat, the UAW and the NLRB continue, Regional Director Glenn Zipp says. If the NLRB does not overrule much of Cat's proposal, the UAW will certainly fight it on the shop floor.

"This code of conduct basically ends trade unionism as we know it," one UAW official says. "It essentially says there is very little concerted activity in the workplace for which you cannot be disciplined. We are now in South Africa or Poland when it comes to labor relations, and people will have to behave accordingly."

For the entire union movement—and anyone concerned about workers having less ability to raise their wages or gain a voice on the job—there is a bigger question: Does the failure of two strikes at Cat in four years by one of the nation's biggest, richest unions mean that strikes are now impossible? And if that's true, how much clout will unions have?

Since the mid-1980s strikes have hovered at record low levels, as employers have grown more willing—even eager—to use permanent replacements to break strikes and unions. Yet many experts thought that an employer such as Cat could never viably operate without its skilled union workforce. Caterpillar's success, however, does not signal the death of the strike, even though it highlights important lessons about their pitfalls and possibilities.

Strikes can still succeed. Earlier this year, for example, the Teamsters won a strong carhauling industry contract by focusing on one key carrier, Ryder, and delaying the strike

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until the crucial fall new model season. Then the union picketed car dealers, leafleting consumers on how to haggle, until dealers rejected cars shipped by alternate means. Eventually, General Motors pressured Ryder to settle. Quickie, limited strikes often work, as was demonstrated by the flight attendants' 1993 strike against American Airlines, the Teamsters' 1994 safety strike against UPS and the UAW strike in Flint last year against excessive overtime. But fewer classic contract shutdowns, with the exception of the Machinists' fairly successful recent strike against Boeing, seem viable if they're not part of a broader assault.

Most UAW workers at Cat showed great determination and solidarity, but the company—with the law and the economy on its side—"planned and got the breaks," says University of Illinois labor expert Ron Peters. The UAW, relying heavily on past methods and weakened by cooperation with management, did not have an adequate strategy. Nobody knows for sure what, if anything, would have worked, but there were options that could have strengthened the union's hand.

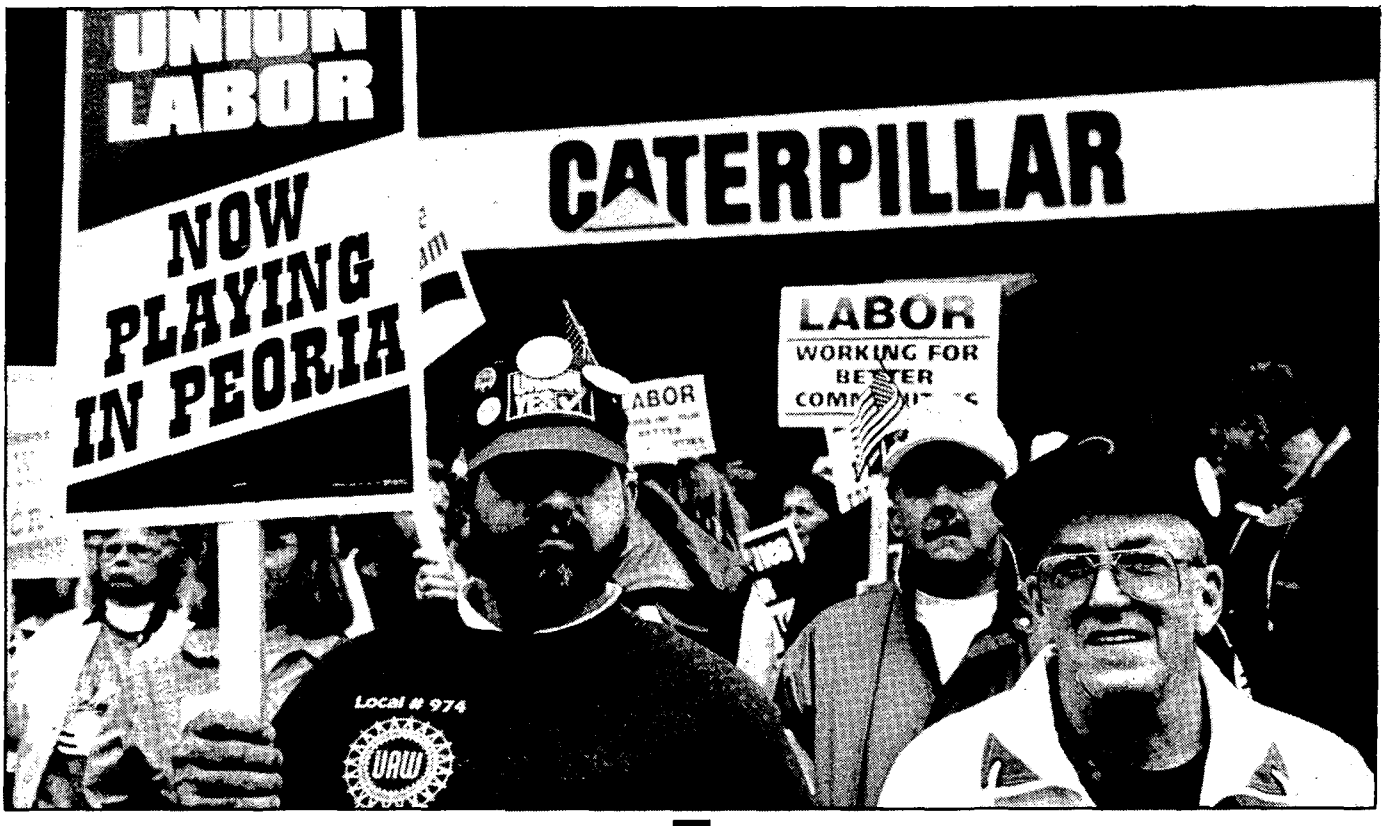
In the 1980s, Cat management persuaded the union to cooperate with its plans to modernize technology, change work rules and reorganize production to respond to global, especially Japanese, competition (though the overvalued dollar was Cat's main competitive problem). But by 1990, after slashing jobs, installing new technology and resorting to massive subcontracting, Cat took a more hostile approach to its remaining employees. Local officials, such as president Jerry Brown of the big Peoria union, tried in vain to warn the UAW official in charge, Bill Casstevens, that it was a new day.

Casstevens, after negotiating a contract with John Deere but failing to get Cat to agree to similar terms, called a strike at two Cat plants in November 1991. The restrained approach left workers confused and divided, and to many it seemed weak. "When you've got a six-shooter," Solomon said some months ago, "you put all six bullets in it."

Yet the timing was also poor for a shootout: Sales were down, and the union had limited leverage—as evidenced by Cat's decision to lock out many of its workers. To make matters worse, Cat could supply spare parts—one of the few strong markets in recessions—through its key logistics unit. The union had, in the cooperative phase, agreed never to strike those units. When the lockout was lifted in February, the union struck most plants, but at the end of March 1992, Cat announced it would permanently replace any workers who didn't return. Fearing both replacements and a break in union ranks, the union ended the strike.

"At least in the initial strike, there was an over-reliance on the way things had always been done, including an over-reliance on pattern bargaining" as a rationale for the strike with both union members and the public, argues Cornell University professor Ron Seeber. Casstevens also did little to prepare workers for the strike: He didn't cancel workplace cooperation programs or even begin an "in-plant campaign" to build worker solidarity.

During the strike, the union did little to move workers off picket lines and into other actions against Caterpillar, its customers or its allies—or into efforts to win support among the



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general public or other unions. Hoping to muster financial market pressure against Cat, the UAW did make a convincing case to Wall Street analysts that the company was competitive and could easily afford UAW demands, but many observers think the UAW did not effectively make its case to the public.

Pursuing alternative strategies first would have permitted the UAW to strike at a time when inventories were depleted and demand was high. It might also have built greater solidarity, reducing later picket-line crossovers.

Clearly, Cat's key weapon was its threat to permanently replace workers. Industrial unions such as the UAW, despite lackluster support from then AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, were fighting hard to pass legislation barring such permanent replacements. When Caterpillar threatened replacements, the labor movement could have raised the stakes in the strike and focused national attention on the issue by filling the streets of Peoria with tens of thousands of nonviolent sit-down protesters.

The union had to scramble for several months to teach the returned strikers about tactics to carry on their fight inside the plant, such as working to rule—doing only what is required and meticulously observing the letter of work protocol while engineering a plant-wide work slowdown. Eventually the in-plant struggles grew and hurt Cat. As supervisors cracked down, they alienated more workers, sparking short wildcat strikes. The UAW also stepped up attacks on other fronts, such as pressuring dealers and trade shows and working with allies, especially embattled Staley and Bridgestone workers in Decatur.

Unfair labor practice charges mounted—there are now 186—and the union struck over them in June 1994. This time sales were strong, but the company was ready with a replacement strategy, including the recruitment of demoralized union members who crossed the picket line. "It used to be unions were strong and people stuck together," Hayes laments, "but now some people just think of themselves." Compounding the betrayal, many local building trades union members crossed the UAW picket lines to maintain equipment. Clearly, the labor movement had failed to nurture an elementary culture of solidarity even in its own ranks.

This failure proved fatal in light of Caterpillar's strategy to ride out the limited costs imposed by the strike. Though the union made the case that Cat would have done better with its regular workforce, during the strike it was still making record profits. Sales were strong, and the dramatic rise in the value of the Japanese yen undercut the company's main competitor, Komatsu. This time, the "global economy" brought windfall profits, but the company wouldn't share the bonus with workers, though it insisted that they pay any costs of global competition.

Throughout the walkout, Cat gained power from its worldwide network of factories since the UAW represents only 16 percent of its global workforce. Despite UAW efforts to build solidarity with the unions at Cat's overseas plants, including a conference in Peoria of all those unions, the strike drew only a few small symbolic gestures of solidarity, in South Africa and Belgium. Clearly, none of these unions will make much progress in the future unless they can find a common strategy.

When Stephen Yokich took over as UAW president last June, he cooled public confrontations and stepped up private bargaining to find a way out of the strike. But Cat's proposals got worse, not better. The company insisted on "alternative schedules," which include 12-hour days and weekend work without premium pay, and offered two modest lump-sum payments over six years instead of pay hikes. "We were willing to eat crap to get this behind us," one UAW official says, "but they wanted to rub it in our face." Eventually, no contract seemed best, much to Cat's surprise.

Management now faces a tough task of running its plants with a divided and hostile workforce. Even the "scabs" were reportedly angry with Cat's imposed terms, according to union monitoring of factory radio communiqués. The union will face even greater difficulties in rebuilding itself. Jerry Tucker, the opposition New Directions caucus leader who had often urged the union to use different tactics earlier, argues that the workers' vote gives Yokich an opportunity to chart a new long-term strategy that stresses both more grass-roots initiative and comprehensive pressure on Cat than the UAW used in the first rounds. "It's an internal organizing project now at several levels," Tucker says, from organizing a strong shop-floor network of informal union stewards to pulling together a global union strategy against Caterpillar.

Even as unions try to find alternatives to strikes, companies are trying to foreclose those options. For example, corporations are pushing legislation in Congress that would restrict common non-strike tactics, such as shareholder resolutions, and many companies are suing unions that use corporate campaign tactics. Caterpillar also seized upon a tangential comment by an administrative law judge in a regional National Labor Relations Board case involving the firing of a union militant to step up its fight against in-plant campaigns. The judge suggested that union in-plant campaigns are not protected activity under federal labor law if they're designed to disrupt production. The ruling is being appealed and sets no precedent, but pro-business strategists are joining Cat officials to press for new restrictions on in-plant strategies.

Union leaders have not yet decided how to continue their fight at Cat, but a strong core of workers remains militant, even as they return from their strike, and the company's tough tactics seem likely to breed conflict. The mood is not as gloomy as one might expect. "I don't see it as a defeat," insists Solomon, whose local had the lowest rate of picket-line crossovers. "As long as we're not accepting their poison and continue to fight for a fair contract, we haven't lost. Many people lose some battles when they fight a war, but the war continues. And until you give up, the war is not over." ◀

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EUROPE

Is Paris burning?

A wave of strikes in France may be the first salvo in the revolt against economic globalization.

By James Cohen
PARIS

Seven months ago, Jacques Chirac was campaigning for the presidency of France on a platform of social harmony, or, in the rhetoric of the moment, "repairing the social fracture." On the campaign trail, one might have thought that he was well to the left of the Socialist he was about to replace, François Mitterand.

But soon after taking office, even the most naive voters realized that Chirac's verbal radicalism was merely an electoral ploy. Prime Minister Alain Juppé, of Chirac's neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) party, took months to come up with a coherent program of government. And when he finally did, the program seemed designed not to heal social divisions but almost expressly to aggravate them.

As if to remind the governing elite how deep those cleavages remain, French public-sector employees, accompanied by large numbers of students, have launched a massive strike that has crippled the country's transport system and other public services. Growing steadily for a period of three weeks in November and December, the strike has made it clear that although France votes to the right after 14 years of Mitterand-style socialism, there is no clear mandate for an attack on the welfare state and its benefits for workers.

The prelude to the current unrest began in October, when civil servants were called upon to accept a wage freeze, resulting in a one-day strike on October 10. But the heart of the government's austerity plan was yet to come. In a November 15 speech to the National Assembly, Juppé announced his plan to seek major reform of Social Security, France's national health care program. With Social Security running a large deficit—expected to reach roughly $46 billion by the end of this year—Juppé said he would reduce it to $6 billion by the end of 1996.

Juppé's deficit-cutting plan, most of which had been top-secret until he delivered his speech, would curtail the broad powers that trade unions have over the Social Security system. The nation's health care and pension program, founded after World War II, has been run largely by administrators designated by employer and trade union organizations, and financed through taxes on employers and wage-earners. The major thrust of Juppé's reform is to reduce contributions from employers and increase the reliance on the Generalized Social Contribution, a regressive tax that supplements the country's regular income tax.

The National Assembly would be given authority to regularly survey the finances of the program, with a mandate to reduce deficits as it sees fit. Trade union participation in the management of the program would continue, but with significantly reduced autonomy. Workers defend the existing health programs jealously and are worried that the Juppé plan would jeopardize their access to reasonably priced care.

A further provision of the Juppé plan, since withdrawn in response to the mobilization, would have required many categories of civil servants to contribute to their pension fund for 40 years instead of 37 1/2 before gaining full benefits. In addition, allocations to families would be cut back and, in some cases, made subject to income tax for the first time. As if these measures were not contentious enough, Juppé announced less than a week later that the new contract between the state and the national railroad corporation, the SNCF, would involve tight austerity measures for rail workers. The essential goal of the new contract was to regionalize the decision-making process—and the financing—of the corporation, thereby helping to reduce the deficit. But additional provisions regarding reduction in hiring, smaller wage hikes and more stringent productivity standards provoked the

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wrath of the French labor movement.

What's behind the drive to reduce the deficit? The Juppé government is acting in strict, even zealous, accordance with the Maastricht treaty, the latest guiding document in the construction of the European Union. The treaty, which has been in effect since 1993, mandates that each signatory nation obey certain "convergence criteria" in order to move toward a common European currency. To abide by Maastricht, governments must take active measures to reduce their deficits. Just as the International Monetary Fund waves its stick at Third World countries with big deficits, the European bureaucracy, under Maastricht, leans on its member countries to "structurally adjust"—with tough austerity measures if necessary. In 1992, French voters were called upon to ratify the treaty by popular referendum. They did so by the narrowest of margins, with just 51.05 percent voting in favor despite the combined support of the Socialists and the free-market right. Many voters already had a sneaking suspicion that the impenetrable 2,000-page document, in spite of the friendly internationalist rhetoric used to sell it, would only bring hardship.

Today, many in France feel that suspicion has been confirmed. And the unrest generated by that feeling has been compounded by other grievances that have come to the fore over the last month. In the nation's public university system, where students have long complained about a lack of facilities and instructors, what began as a series of scattered protests in early November spread to half the system's campuses by the end of the month. And those demonstrations, combined with the growing union protests, created a heady mix.

Initially, labor movement leaders differed somewhat over which demands to emphasize. The national strike and demonstrations called for October 24, the first "day of action," were originally intended to express disapproval of the revision of special retirement plans. But the powerful CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail) brought in its forces only under the condition that the plan to modify health care also be included as a target of protest. From that moment on, the movement began to snowball, and each successive day of action—there have been five since October 24—has brought more and more people out of the workplace and into the streets, reaching a peak of far more than a million marchers on December 7.

Much of the international press has focused on Paris' city transport system, which has been virtually shut down since November 28. But the strike also involved the nation's railroad workers, postal and electrical workers, as well as employees of the telephone, airline and hundreds of public administration services. Several cities, including Marseilles, Toulouse and Bordeaux, have witnessed their largest demonstrations since 1968, while many smaller cities, not usually affected by labor action, have seen their first marches in decades.

Although the original objectives of the movement have by no means fallen from view, it has broadened to include a general protest against the country's increasingly harsh working conditions. Unemployment currently stands at 12 percent, while workers are being driven into more and more short-term contracts, part-time jobs or poorly paid training programs disguised as employment.

Two major trade union confederations have spearheaded the movement: the CGT and Force Ouvrière (FO). The CGT is historically linked to the Communist Party, although some of its leaders have attempted in recent years to stake out more independence. FO was created in 1947, in an urgent Cold War atmosphere, to compete with the CGT. This is first time they have cooperated to such a degree.

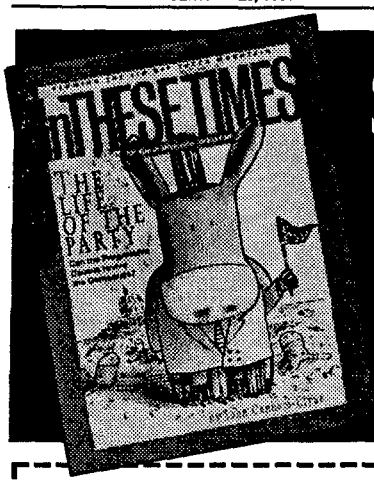
The unions have their own organizational reasons for fighting the government's reform plan. FO in particular has come to play a leading role in administering the health care program and does not want to lose its privileges. What is striking about this movement, however, is that it has been swept along by an exceptional burst of energy from local union sections and non-unionized workers.

A third major confederation, the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT), has been divided over Juppé's agenda. Twenty years ago, the CFDT was at the forefront of thinking on worker self-management, but its current secretary-general, Nicole Notat, has all but taken the side of the government, declaring that Juppé's reforms are necessary and worthy of constructive criticism. Many of the regional federations of the CFDT have greeted Notat's position as an act of betrayal, and this resentment may well come back to haunt Notat later. But for the moment, she remains in charge of the CFDT apparatus.

Many commentators have been tempted to compare the current movement with that of May 1968. There are some obvious similarities: hundreds of thousands of workers in the streets, thousands of students joining them. But the parallel stops there. The current movement is not a general strike. Only the public sector is concerned; it has not spilled over in any significant way to the private sector. And this is not a movement with an agenda for broad social change. Of course, participants in the 1968 events may have lacked a clear vision of the future, but in those days, utopian dreams were in the air. In the wintry days of late 1995, workers and students are on the defensive. They're mostly trying to ward off measures that would further degrade their status.

The movement, whatever its immediate outcome, will have a profound effect on all the political parties. Chirac and Juppé's own RPR is deeply divided, partly because some of its leaders were early opponents of the Maastricht treaty. National Assembly President Philippe Séguin, who led the RPR's anti-Maastricht forces in 1992 and is sometimes hailed as a possible successor to Juppé, actually went to visit striking rail workers in his city of Epinal. Séguin invited TV cameras along, thus distancing himself from the government's hard-line approach. Many of Juppé's political allies have felt all along that the prime minister has projected the image of an arrogant and heartless technocrat. He has softened his position somewhat in response to such criticisms,

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but not to the satisfaction of the unions, which at this writing are pressing for Juppé's resignation, a withdrawal of the plan and direct high-level negotiations with Chirac's government.

Another portion of the RPR leadership attempted early on to build a movement of "irate citizens against the strikers." But with public opinion polls showing far more than half of the French supporting the strikers, they abandoned that effort quickly as a public relations disaster.

The Socialist Party was at first divided between clear opponents of Juppé's reforms and those, like the CFDT's Notat, who were ready to accept the measures in principle while negotiating the details. As the strike moved into its third week, however, newly elected party leader Lionel Jospin has called emphatically for a withdrawal of the reforms and a fully open negotiation on Social Security and the rest. The irony of the situation is, of course, that Jospin—along with all but a few other Socialist leaders—were among the strongest proponents of Maastricht. In a sense, they brought the anti-deficit fever on themselves. Interestingly, however, the Socialists have profited from the burgeoning movement by winning five out of six midterm parliamentary elections this month.

The Communist Party clearly supports the strikers, devoting most of the pages of its daily, *L'Humanité,* to accounts of the movement, but the party leadership has preferred to remain very discreet about any possible political advantage to be gained from the situation, since in fact it sees none. The left as a whole, and the Communists in particular, make up such a small minority in the current National Assembly that no quick recovery can be expected, even if early elections were called. (Socialists and Communists combined hold about one-sixth of the seats in the Assembly.)

The far-right, racist National Front, which has no seats in the Assembly, has played a marginal role in recent events, and this is news in itself. Labor issues have brilliantly upstaged the ethnic populism that Jean-Marie Le Pen and his followers have promoted since the early '80s. The striking workers and students are of all colors and origins, a fact that nearly everyone takes for granted.

Under pressure to make concessions to the mushrooming strike movement, Juppé, in the second week of December, withdrew plans to modify retirement plans and suspended the new contract with the railroad corporation. After much hesitation, he indicated his willingness to conduct negotiations with the unions. He has held fast, however, to his health care reform plans, and this has kept the movement growing.

While European financial markets and top officials of the European Union support Juppé's measures, which they believe are necessary to maintain the continent's competitiveness in the global economy, French workers see matters much differently. It's unlikely that labor militancy in one country will suffice to turn the tide toward a different vision of Europe. But the current movement in France may be seen, in the words of Erik Israelewicz, an economic analyst for *Le Monde*, as "the first revolt against globalization." ◀

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BOSNIA

An uneasy peace

Why the Dayton accord may be a step backward for the Balkans.

By Roy Gutman

As NATO troops began arriving in Bosnia earlier this month, the rough peace hammered out at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, had already begun to show signs of strain. In western Bosnia, Croat troops began sacking towns that the treaty says they must turn over to the Bosnian Serbs. And the Bosnian Serbs have mounted a series of protests against the agreement. Although the Bosnian government seems resigned to the carving up of the country, its military leadership is predicting a resumption of the war.

Whether the 21 days of negotiations in Dayton will lead to the permanent partition of Bosnia or to its eventual reunification is uncertain. That was the gamble taken by Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, who agreed at Dayton to dissolve his country's current government in favor of a poorly understood alternative: In place of a multiethnic Bosnia state, the Dayton accord establishes a Muslim-Croat federation and an autonomous Bosnian Serb republic. Those two entities will belong to a central Bosnian state with uncertain authority. Ominously, though, the Muslim-Croat federation and Bosnian-Serb republic will both retain their own armies.

Despite the deficiencies of the treaty, it is far too soon to dismiss it outright. The accord contains many provisions that, if implemented, could provide a basis for peace in the region. Every conceivable human-rights provision is contained in the Dayton agreement. There will be an internationally appointed human-rights chamber—though it apparently possesses no powers of compulsion. And the agreement calls for free elections and the return of Bosnia's 2.2 million refugees to their homes—though, again, there is little sense of how these laudable goals will be achieved.

In theory, these objectives are guaranteed by the presence of NATO troops. Led by U.S. forces, they have been given sweeping powers to enforce the treaty. Annex 1A, one of 11 side agreements to the accord, lays out NATO's aggressive rules of engagement, and was drafted with the expectation that the Bosnian Serbs would not submit to the treaty. By initialing that annex, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic—who negotiated on behalf of his erstwhile Bosnian Serb allies—effectively endorsed NATO's use of lethal force to cut the government of President Radovan Karadzic down to size.

Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia have pledged to cooperate fully with the Hague war crimes tribunal in the investigation and prosecution of suspected offenders, and all the Bosnian parties have granted tribunal investigators unrestricted access to all sites and persons. In addition, every weapon, every facility and every military unit is subject to inspection and removal at the whim of the NATO implementation force, known as IFOR. That language, anyway, is unambiguous.

But the accord remains fraught with ambiguities, and even the Clinton administration has shown signs of confusion in regards to the treaty. In a breakfast meeting with reporters on December 6, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake was asked whether NATO troops will exercise full freedom of movement in Bosnia, a key to full implementation of the accord. At first, Lake dodged the question. Then he hedged, saying "there will be the *right* to freedom of movement (emphasis added)." On the same day, during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, took a much stronger stand. Shalikashvili insisted that "IFOR has complete freedom of movement throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina." He added, "We really need to exercise it if for no other reason [than] that we need to resupply ourselves. But we also want to do it to ensure that

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A Muslim couple in the Bosnian city of Mostar

freedom of movement exists."

While the administration tries to sort out what the 60,000 NATO troops in Bosnia will do, there is still the question of whether they should have been sent in the first place. The timing of the U.S. diplomatic initiative puzzled many close observers. By the time Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke hit high gear with preliminary conferences in Geneva and New York in September, the Bosnian government troops—with the help of Croatian forces—were well on their way to regaining much of the territory lost to the Bosnian Serbs during the three-year war. The Bosnian Serb assaults against the U.N. safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa in July forced Presidents Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia to overcome their mutual distrust in order to save Bihac, an enclave of great strategic value to both countries. En route to Bihac, well-trained Croatian troops recaptured the Krajina. Croatian Serbs fled en masse, convincing Milosevic and his countrymen that the mad quest for a Greater Serbia was over.

In the meantime, NATO was preparing its own response to the Bosnian Serb assaults on the safe areas. In early September, on the pretext of Serb shelling of Sarajevo, NATO bombers delivered a severe and sudden blow to the Bosnian Serbs, briefly depriving the Bosnian Serb Army of its command and control links and forcing it to withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. The Bihac-based Fifth Corps of the Bosnian government army seized the moment, racing with Croatian troops and Bosnian Croat forces to capture an enormous swath of territory in western Bosnia. The combined armies were a few days short of laying siege to Banja Luka when the U.S. administration demanded they halt in late September. Clinton may one day rue that decision as a strategic blunder.

But the president did not act entirely on his own. Izetbegovic and his foreign minister, Mohamed Sacirbey, doubted the possibility and even the merits of military conquest. Ignoring the strategic benefits of cooperating with Croatia, they publicly questioned Tudjman's motives for sending the Croat army into Bosnia. They had reason, especially after Croat troops in September grabbed towns such as Jajce in western Bosnia, brazenly hoisted the Croatian checkerboard flag, and blocked Bosnian government troops and former Muslim residents from entering. In addition, the ill-equipped Bosnian government army was stretched perilously thin. Still,

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there is no doubt that the Bosnian Serbs were rapidly losing ground and running scared.

Gen. Ratko Mladic, commander of the Bosnian Serb forces, has since admitted in interviews that his army was on the verge of being routed. The combined Bosnian-Croatian forces had seized at least 52 percent of Bosnia and might have regained a full 75 percent. That result would have simplified NATO's task immensely, perhaps obviating an intervention altogether. But that would have required a different NATO strategy and some solid U.S. coaching of Tudjman and Izetbegovic. By the fall, however, the Americans had talked themselves, their NATO allies and Russia into a different course of action: a peace conference and NATO deployment.

Although Izetbegovic and Tudjman were at odds, Richard Holbrooke, referred to by State Department colleagues as "the raging bull," charged on. In advance of the Dayton negotiations, Milosevic—eager for any vehicle to lift economic sanctions against Serbia—grandly announced that he was taking charge of the Bosnian Serb delegation. At conferences in Geneva and New York, Holbrooke set the stage by convincing the Bosnian government to endorse constitutional principles that would divide the country in two with a weak central government.

So after years of effectively sitting out the Bosnia conflict, what was America's rush? According to conventional wisdom, Clinton launched the diplomatic initiative this summer to prevent Congress from lifting the U.S. arms embargo against Bosnia. In the wake of the Serb assaults on Srebrenica, Zepa and Bihac, Congress was poised to override his veto, a move that would have embarrassed the president and shaken U.S. relations with alliance partners Britain and France, both of which had peacekeeping troops in Bosnia and feared any escalation of the fighting. Pundits have also argued that with an election year approaching, the president was eager to remove the blot of U.S. inaction in Bosnia from his foreign policy record.

Of course, Clinton's decision to send American troops into the fog-shrouded mountains of Bosnia has proved anything but popular. And so the White House's argument that the NATO deployment is a strictly humanitarian intervention deserves a fair hearing. According to the administration's version of events, President Clinton became genuinely outraged in May when Bosnian Serbs reacted to NATO's pinprick bombing raids by taking hundreds of U.N. troops hostage. While golfing with Lake, the president reportedly told him to devise a strategy to end the Bosnian conflict. According to a White House aide, Clinton declared the current U.N. deployment unsustainable and committed the United States to lead any diplomatic and military initiative on Bosnia. That decision reportedly opened the way to Dayton.

Unfortunately, the diplomacy that grew out of that effort belies the administration's high-minded rhetoric. The effective halving of Bosnia's territory, with its echoes of Yalta, was a carryover from the Owen-Stoltenberg plan of July 1993. The aim then was to partition Bosnia into three parts, with an arbitrary 33.3 percent going to Muslims, 17 percent to the Bosnian Croats and the rest to the Serbs. The U.S.-sponsored creation of the Muslim-Croat federation in spring 1994 permitted the two parcels to be combined to equal 51 percent. When Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States formed the Contact Group later that spring, they adopted the 51/49 ratio. At Dayton, the 51/49 percentage became a straitjacket, leading to unseemly and divisive territorial trading that may cause lasting damage to the Bosnian Federation.

The arbitrary division of territory was encouraged by the composition of the delegations. Unlike the parties to most serious diplomatic proceedings, the participants at Dayton—except for the Croatians—negotiated on behalf of people they could not truly claim to represent. Milosevic took complete charge of the Bosnian Serb delegation, reducing Momcilo Krajisnik, the speaker of the Bosnian Serb assembly, and Nikola Koljevic, President Radovan Karadzic's deputy, to bit parts. Even more surprising was the Bosnian government delegation. The Sarajevo-based leadership failed to include representatives from eastern Bosnia, the Bosnian Krajina and southern Herzegovina—the areas about to be traded away. With so few people from the region claiming to represent so many, the conference sponsors easily fell into the trap of remaking the state as if it were an exercise in mapmaking.

It is no surprise that the jerry-built structure that resulted cannot stand on its own but requires a NATO force to implement it. Arguably, every ethnic group now has ample reason to disagree with both the methods and the results of the Dayton conference. Kresimir Zubak, the head of the Croatian community in Bosnia who negotiated the 1994 accord creating the Muslim-Croat federation and became federation president, refused to initial the Dayton deal and tendered his resignation. Zubak is one of the few real moderates among Croats. Also resigning was Bosnian government Foreign Minister Sacirbey, who said he was yielding to allow a top position to go to the Bosnian Croats.

At the moment, it is far too early to pass judgment on the uneasy peace that has been reached in the Balkans. What is now an armed truce could become a real peace if NATO troops move decisively to force the compliance of the Bosnian Serbs. And if the end result of NATO's intervention is to dismantle the power structure of Karadzic's Republika Srpska, Bosnia-Herzegovina could yet make it as a multiethnic state. In that case, critics may one day forgive the shortcuts used to reach that goal.

But if the intervention falls short of that aim, war almost certainly will return to the Balkans. And if that happens, one wonders how the Bosnians will ever take charge of their country again. ◀

Roy Gutman, winner of a 1993 Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of Bosnia, is a reporter for *Newsday*. A version of this article also appears in the current issue of the London-based magazine *WarReport*.

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ISRAEL

A house divided

In the aftermath of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, the political fissures within Israeli society have been laid bare.

By Emily L. Hauser
TEL AVIV

In Israel, now, it is impossible to discuss any aspect of life outside of the shadow of last month's assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The tragic event has deeply affected the way most Israelis think about—and will undoubtedly influence the outcome of—the nation's most important issues, such as the future of peace with the Palestinians or the next national election, scheduled for October 1996.

Yet the smaller ways in which people go about their daily lives have also changed. Last week, as the country ended the traditional Jewish 30-day mourning period, Israelis still struggled to make sense of life after the assassination. Gidi Gov, an immensely popular local singer and talk-show host, expressed a sense of despair common to many. "We have been broken, and we will never heal," he lamented. "Much as I want peace, it almost doesn't matter anymore if peace comes."

Such melancholy aside, most experts agree that the Israeli-Arab negotiations will not be significantly altered by the assassination, at least not in the short run. In fact, polls conducted after Rabin was killed indicate that the peace process enjoys more popular support now than ever.

Yet such polls can be misleading and must be seen in context. The Steinmetz Center for Peace Studies, a research institute that publishes a monthly "Peace Index," found that on November 8, four days after the assassination, 73 percent of the population supported the peace process, compared to 55 percent on October 29. By November 29, however, the number had dropped to 66 percent. Dr. Tamar Herman, one of the center's senior researchers, expects support to continue to fall and predicts that it will stabilize at a level 5 percent higher than October's figure.

"People who were convinced that [the peace process] was wrong will not change their minds," Herman explains. "But [among] people who were undecided ... I expect [the assassination] will create movement from the center [toward the left]. But this is very much dependent on what the government does. If tomorrow there's a decision to relinquish all of the Golan Heights [to Syria], anything could go back to where it was before."

Muli Peleg, a political science and international relations scholar at Tel Aviv University, agrees with Herman. Attempts to forge national unity, such as the recent conciliatory meeting between members of Peace Now and representatives of the right-wing settler movement Yesha, Peleg says, are less an indication of some rapprochement than a panicked response to a harrowing event. "I don't think that trying to consolidate both ends [of the political spectrum] to one goal will be fruitful. It's a lost game."

"This will last until the next trauma," Peleg adds. "With the next bus bomb, or the evacuation of settlements, or negotiations over the future of Jerusalem, people will stand on their hind legs, and the first thing to disappear will be this delicate agreement to disagree."

To some extent, "delicacy" is already a moot point. The right, whose vitriolic rhetoric inspired assassin Yigal Amir, is accusing the government of conducting a witch hunt against them. Nadia Matar, leader of the "Women in Green," a far-right women's movement, has called the aggressive police campaign against those suspected of abetting Amir "a sacrilegious reign of terror" to quiet dissent.

However self-serving the right's complaints may be, it is difficult to dismiss the vigor with which Israel's security forces are arresting people whose opinions diverge from those of the government. And however understandable is the Israeli public's desire to eradicate political terror, its willingness to countenance infringements of due process and

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freedom of expression is disturbing. One poll revealed 63 percent of the public to have favored giving police a free hand, "without too much concern for legal limitations," and 56 percent supported banning demonstrations by "extremist organizations."

Much of the current conflict centers around the growing rift in Israeli society between religious and secular Jews. The vast majority of right-wing extremists are religiously observant, leading a number of leftist secularists to conclude, in turn, that the vast majority of religious Israelis are extreme right-wingers. Men in yarmulkes have been spat at or even hit; the bags of two religious young women were recently searched by a store security guard "for the gun, to see which one of you is the murderer." In a sense, the Rabin assassination has merely removed a thin veil that had long hidden the hostile relations between large sections of Israel's observant and non-observant publics.

Accused by certain religious leaders of having no values, and forced by coalition politics to accept religious legislation some found offensive, many of Israel's non-observant Jews have come to view Judaism and its believers as foreign, even bordering on the primitive. The fact that Rabin's assassin was the product of a religious education merely confirmed the stereotypes many secularists already held. "Religion is the enemy," one leftist told the press.

Gershom Gorenberg, a religious journalist with the English-language *Jerusalem Report*, recently addressed the schism: "The assassination is not only a tragedy for the Jewish state," he wrote, "but a historic disaster for the Jewish faith."

"I am very concerned about this issue, for the future of Israeli society," says Galia Golan, a secular political science professor at Hebrew University. "It makes one think that perhaps this is a chasm that cannot be bridged."

Nonetheless, some are trying. Peres appointed Rabbi Yehuda Amital, the head of a yeshiva on the West Bank, as minister-without-portfolio in his government. As a longtime supporter of a negotiated peace, Amital has repeatedly declared his willingness to return territories to the Palestinians. Judaism teaches that life is more important than land, he says, decrying the right's efforts to "delegitimize the government and the peace process."

A better-known antagonism, that between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens, has also been affected by Rabin's murder. On the one hand, reports Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, Jewish co-director of the Givat Haviva Jewish-Arab Center for Peace, Arab-Israelis express a deep anxiety that, as one notable told her, "If [right-wing extremists] can kill the prime minister, what's to stop them from picking up a gun against any old Arab?"

On the other hand, the assassination provided Arab-Israelis with a surprising opportunity for identification with the Jewish public. Like their Jewish neighbors, the Arab community publicly mourned Rabin, holding memorial services and filing past his coffin. Rabin had dramatically increased Arab municipal budgets, abolished a number of discriminatory practices and generally made real efforts to redress the inequalities that have always plagued Israeli society. As many Jews have historically stood by their fellow Arab citizens in their struggle for equal treatment, Ozacky-Lazar says, "now [the Arabs] can stand by their Jewish brothers in this time of joint mourning."

The elevation of Peres to the prime minister's post may actually lead to better circumstances for Israel's Arab citizens, as Peres is widely considered to be more conciliatory than his predecessor. "All we want," Givat Haviva's Arab co-director, Salem Jubran, says, "is to feel that we are equal partners, with equal opportunities—that we have an interest in being in this state."

Indeed, the question of citizenship is very important to Arab-Israelis, the vast majority of whom want to see a Palestinian state established but want just as much to remain in Israel. "When people ask me if I will move to live under the Palestinian Authority," Muhammad Ghanaim, an Arab-Israeli writer and translator, recently told the *Jerusalem Report*, "it reflects a critical misunderstanding of my situation. ... I was born here as a citizen." While Israeli democracy is "seriously flawed," Ghanaim says, he is even more critical of the Palestinian Authority. "There is no Palestinian democracy," he insists.

There is hope that the first elections in the Palestinian Authority, scheduled for next year, will lead to the kind of democracy Ghanaim seeks. Of course, that ultimate democratic right—self-determination—is still not open to the Palestinians, and Rabin himself declared time and again that he would never "allow" the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Somewhat surprisingly, Rabin was in fact out of step with the rest of the country on this issue. Galia Golan reports that recent studies show that 40 percent of Israelis see a Palestinian state "as an option they could live with," and 70 percent see the establishment of such a state as inevitable. "It's really amazing," Ozacky-Lazar says. "That 40 percent [up from 17 percent in 1994] has just happened in the last year. It was once considered traitorous to even suggest it." Here again, Peres is expected to be more flexible than Rabin was.

To be sure, the path to peace is still strewn with obstacles, not the least of which being the 35 percent of Israelis who could not support the peace process when asked on November 29. Yet if the Rabin assassination reveals nothing else, it shows that, while at least a small majority continues to favor continued negotiations, Israelis may be facing their biggest struggle yet: the question of who they are, and what kind of country they want, once the wars are over.

"Peace will leave us with all these schisms that we've been ignoring [for the sake of national unity]," says Muli Peleg. "In a twisted way, peace is going to deal us a very serious blow. In the short run at least, we are going to find ourselves in real disarray." ◀

Emily L. Hauser is a freelance writer living in Tel Aviv.

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BLACK AMERICA

All in the family

As Jesse Jackson Jr. heads to Congress, Jesse Sr. is moving to rebuild his political base.

By Salim Muwakkil
CHICAGO

A little more than a week before Jesse L. Jackson Jr. trounced his Republican opponent in the December 12 special election in Illinois' 2nd Congressional District, Jesse L. Jackson Sr. returned here to reprise his role as head of Operation PUSH, the civil rights group he founded in 1971. The confluence of the two events kept the Jackson name in the headlines for three weeks and prompted some critics to accuse Jesse Sr. of exploiting his son's victory for his own devices.

Those critics are right, of course. But, as usual, their criticism is irrelevant. By using Junior's success (the younger Jackson is called "Junior" by friends and foes alike) to boost his fading status, Jackson is reaping the benefits of the seeds—both political and filial—that he has sown. And there's little doubt that Jesse Jr.'s victory was greased by his father's celebrity.

The younger Jackson is, in some respects, black America's first political prince. In a country rich with dynastic political names (Adams, Roosevelt, Kennedy et al), the Jackson clan is threatening to become the nation's newest political dynasty. And Junior clearly has benefited from his bequeathal. He's traveled widely and, under his father's tutelage, has rubbed elbows with an astonishing array of international leaders. Thus, this 30-year-old congressional freshman is unusually comfortable with the pomp of power and the glare of klieg lights.

Jesse Jr. has long worked in his father's orbit, most prominently as field director of the National Rainbow Coalition (NRC), a position he assumed in 1993. Junior's political rhetoric echoes his father's, as do his broader philosophical themes. And he often uses Dad's alliterative messages to help illustrate his political positions.

But Jackson is more than just a chip off the old block. He has a bachelor's degree in business, a master's in theology and a law degree from the University of Illinois. And while his father has never been known for his attention to the minutiae of political work, Jesse Jr. is a details man. The younger Jackson is well-acquainted with the information superhighway and even set up a bank of specially programmed computers in his home to aid his campaign effort. "I didn't just rely on my father's good name. We worked hard," Jackson says, slipping into the imperial "we" that Jesse Sr. also favors. "We registered more than 5,000 voters [during the primary campaign] and our margin of victory was 5,000 votes."

The younger Jackson made his public debut during the 1988 Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, where he introduced his father to the delegates. Only 23 at the time, Jesse Jr. impressed observers with his confidence and maturity. Since then, he has been in nearly constant demand as a public speaker and has earned thousands of dollars delivering speeches in a variety of venues. Junior lacks his father's oratorical flair, but he has a restrained eloquence that is striking in its own right.

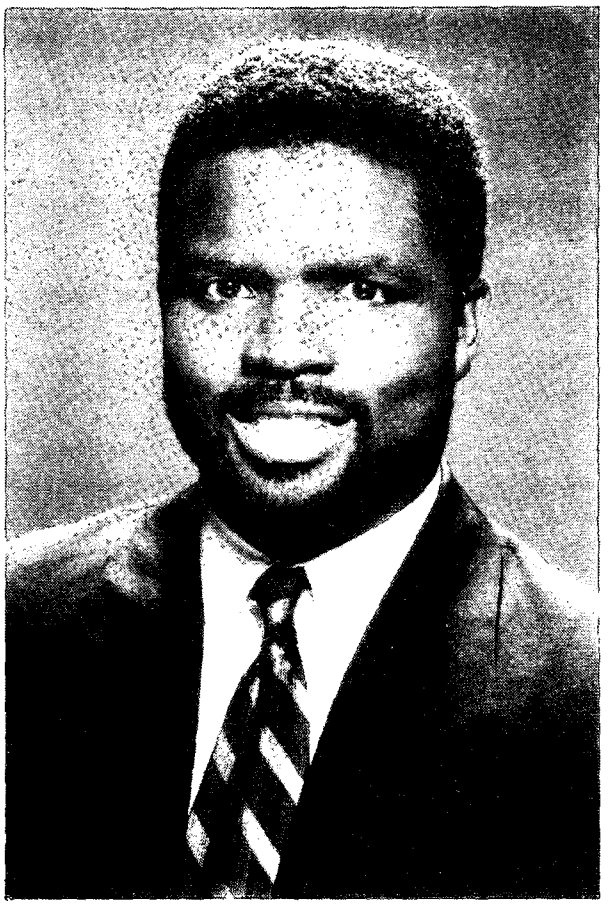
And Jackson will need to muster all his considerable skills if he hopes to make a difference in Illinois' troubled 2nd District. The once heavily industrialized district stretches from Chicago's South Side into several south suburbs. Much of the area is economically blighted, depleted by the exodus of the once-dominant steel industry. It has a mostly poor and working-class population of about 572,000, two-thirds of which is African-American.

In the hard-fought November 28 primary—which, in this heavily Democratic district, was more hotly contested than the general election—Jackson defeated state Sen. Emil Jones, state Sen. Alice Palmer and state Rep. Monique Davis and several minor candidates. Although just 21 percent of the eligible voters participated, Jackson captured 48.7 percent

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of the vote. His nearest opponent, Emil Jones, polled 38.6 percent. (His race against Republican Thomas J. Somer was considerably easier; Jackson took 76 percent of the vote.)

Jackson's prescriptions for the district's ills—increased government investment, buttressing rather than shredding the social safety net, etc.—are standard left-liberal fare. But Junior also seems willing to entertain notions that more doctrinaire liberals might avoid. For example, he supports Republican Gov. Jim Edgar's efforts to construct a third Chicago-area airport in a small town 30 miles south of the city.



Jesse Jackson Jr.

Jackson is the district's third representative since 1993. Former Rep. Mel Reynolds, who resigned in October after his conviction for having sex with a minor, was sworn in for his first term in January 1993. The promising Rhodes scholar had defeated six-term Democratic Rep. Gus Savage, whose chronic absenteeism and anti-Semitic rhetoric brought an overdose of controversy into the district. "I intend to bring a strong sense of stability to the people of this long-suffering district," Jackson says.

But he didn't avoid controversy altogether. The media and his opponents denounced Jackson during the campaign for not disavowing the support of Wallace "Gator" Bradley, a former enforcer for a Chicago street gang and a prime mover in the nationwide gang-truce movement. But so far Jackson has defied the conventional wisdom that demonizes urban black youth. "We cannot allow the press to force us to distance ourselves from parentless and alienated black youth," he says. "I put my lead in jeopardy by insisting that we stand by our less fortunate brothers. The reality of our community is that one out of every three young black men is involved in the criminal justice system. ... With such a large proportion of our young men alienated from the mainstream, we can't afford to turn our backs."

Jackson's campaign emphasized his youth and, unsurprisingly, promoted the idea that seasoned leadership must be honed early. Jackson contends that his election represents a generational change in African-American politics, and he intends to emphasize this theme in coming months. "During the first two weeks in January, Louisiana Rep. Cleo Fields and I will organize something we call the 'Next Generation Conference,' in which we will reach out to young people who want to run for political office, as well as those who want to get involved in the political process on other levels."

Jesse Jr.'s youth movement could provide his father with a crucial new connection to younger black Americans, who have gravitated in recent years to Louis Farrakhan, head of the Chicago-based Nation of Islam (NOI). Farrakhan is much more popular among black youth than either of the Jesse Jacksons. The NOI leader's mushrooming popularity has forced both Jacksons to make their grudging peace with Farrakhan; the two attended a post-Million Man March celebration at the NOI headquarters mosque and agreed to work together on a joint political agenda. Nevertheless, the younger Jackson refuses to mince words about his abhorrence of anti-Semitism and the other biases of which the NOI is regularly accused.

The emergence of Jesse Jr. in the 2nd District and the return of Jesse Sr. to Chicago promises to alter the contours of black politics in the city—and no group will be more affected than Operation PUSH, which the elder Jackson left behind when he moved to Washington following his first presidential run in 1984. Building on the momentum of that campaign, Jackson founded the NRC in the nation's capital. Cynics note that Jackson left just as Harold Washington, elected as the Chicago's first black mayor in 1983, had supplanted him as the city's major black political voice.

After Jackson's departure, Operation PUSH foundered under a succession of ineffective leaders. Although the Rev. Jackson has picked up the reins of the Chicago group, he will maintain his primary residence in Washington and continue to serve as NRC president. To better reflect the new hybrid nature of the two groups, Jackson has changed the name of PUSH's traditional Saturday gathering to the Rainbow-PUSH Community Forum and has promised to integrate the broader political themes of the NRC into the more traditionally civil rights-oriented PUSH.

It is far too early to tell how the synergy between the two Jacksons will play itself out. But in a time when progressive politics has utterly failed to capture the popular imagination, the rise of the Jackson family could betoken its renewal, at least within the African-American community of Chicago. ◀

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IN THE ARTS

Just an old sweet song

Jennifer Jason Leigh produces and stars in a harrowing study of thwarted ambition.

By Pat Dowell

While nothing from the mercenary heart of Hollywood has been particularly gripping in 1995, the film industry's margins have come alive with such rhapsodies of anxious passion as Mike Figgis' *Leaving Las Vegas* and, now, Ulu Grosbard's *Georgia*.

Unlike Figgis' morose and moody film, *Georgia* is no saga of star-crossed lovers. It is, rather, a tale of two sisters, and a rambling reverie on obscurity, aspiration and fame. One sister, Georgia (played by Mare Winningham), is a singer who is calm, centered, talented and adored by her folk-rock fans. She's even happily married and lives in a big, welcoming country farmhouse.

Her sister is Sadie Flood, a bedraggled punk with no visible means of support, either in the world or in her psyche. Played by the film's star (and first-time producer), Jennifer Jason Leigh, Sadie is saddled with, and exalted by, an outsized and unbreachable faith in her own vocation as a rock vocalist. But, as Georgia helpfully points out, she just can't sing.

The movie evokes the ebb and flow of their relationship as Sadie stumbles into Georgia's life once again to disturb the singing star's famous composure. It's a character study that makes scarcely a nod to conventional notions of plot, and for a while its odd rhythms feel almost exotic and, yes, a little boring. It's hard to remember another movie quite like it, but in its attention to the details of long-term relationships, with their filled silences and shorthand intimacies, it reminded me of that harrowing portrait of marital crack-up called *Petulia* (1968), which *Georgia*'s screenwriter and co-producer, Barbara Turner, co-wrote.

Georgia resembles *Leaving Las Vegas* in another respect: It was made on a shoestring budget by people who usually toil unrewarded in the mainstream, helping the stars look good. Barbara Turner, for instance, has written several television movies, many of them exceptional, and most of them unremarked. Mare Winningham, who sings her own songs in the title role of Georgia, has been underrated as a Hollywood supporting player and star of television movies for about 15 years. Ted Levine is usually typecast as a bad guy (notably the killer in *The Silence of the Lambs*) but turns in an understated and engaging performance as Georgia's guileless but observant husband. Director Ulu Grosbard is famous mostly for his tussle with Dustin Hoffman over control of the ex-convict drama *Straight Time* (1978). Mostly a stage director now, Grosbard hasn't made a movie since 1984's Meryl Streep and Robert DeNiro romance, *Falling in Love*.

In *Georgia*, Grosbard's self-effacing direction serves the subject and the actors well, especially his star, who is rapidly acquiring a reputation as an unswervable virtuoso with a taste for the rawest of acting meat. In fact, if there's a typical Jennifer Jason Leigh role, Sadie Flood is it. Painfully thin, her eyes a perpetual raccoon mask of running mascara and eyeliner, her arms and neck covered with



Georgia
Directed by
Ulu Grosbard

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real jewelry and some drawn on with black magic markers, Sadie appears to be on the eve of destruction even in the film's opening scene, which has her cleaning out motel rooms to tide her over.

Frequently zoned out on drugs and booze, hanging on to a succession of self-absorbed men who can provide sustenance for a day or a week, she dons a brave cheerfulness that is all the more chilling for its sincerity. As Sadie only half-jokes about herself, "Is there anything Sadie won't stoop to?"

That's not so much a question, it turns out, as a manifesto. Sadie's dire straits cannot drown her nor dim her eagerness to accept any offer that life puts in her way, including a proposal of marriage from the earnest young man who stays on after delivering her groceries one day. His name is Axel, and it's safe to say he has no idea what he's taking on, but you have to admire his chivalry. In this role, Max Perlich, a soulful geeky redhead who can do anything (as he showed in *Rush* and *Drugstore Cowboy*), creates another haunting portrait of life at the margins.



The spotlight of a single stage reveals just how much uncharted hostility lies between the sisters. It's a powerfully discomfiting scene, likely to separate the movie's fans from mere fidgety bystanders. At a concert, Georgia reluctantly introduces Sadie to sing. Sadie launches into a terrible, raw, quivering version of Van Morrison's "Take Me Back," and in her ecstatic, naked will to perform is unaware of anything but her singing. For nearly 10 minutes, she gives her all, and in a strange way, her agonizingly flawed performance becomes more compelling than the perfection of her sister. Before Sadie's song is done, however, Georgia quietly reasserts her own dominion, posing as rescuer.

The unspoken rift between them widens after this, and Sadie drifts away once more. But she gets herself back to Georgia and the bedrock stability Georgia represents when drugs and death seem to be closing in. Jennifer Jason Leigh has an unforgettably harrowing and bitterly funny scene as she tries to catch a plane home. At the airport gate, barely able to walk, she is stopped from boarding for want of footwear. She just turns around and, in a moment of unadorned public need, throws herself impatiently on the mercy of strangers, demanding a pair of shoes.

Detox provides the sisters enough peace to reconcile, and it becomes clear that Georgia, for all her worldly goods and inner peace, harbors a kind of envy for Sadie's appetites and extremes. "I always think, Sadie's just out there gobbling up the world," Georgia finally tells her sister.

Georgia may feel all the more lived in because it's a family affair. Leigh commissioned the script from Turner, who is her mother. She also recruited Mare Winningham, who has been a friend since summer camp. And much of Sadie's reckless abandon comes from the history of one of Leigh's sisters, Carrie. Leigh, it appears, lives a life as conspicuously composed as Georgia's, which is why, probably, she likes to play the Sadies of the world.

The movie is a bit untidy, like Sadie's life, and a little long. (What isn't these days, when cop movies like *Heat* drone on for three hours?) But it has life and seems human, at a moment when the blockbuster industry has been at its most entertaining while trying to eliminate humans from the screen, by which I mean *Toy Story*. In that hermetic Disney fantasy, the computer animators say, the hardest thing to do was to create the nicks, dents and dustballs that make a world look lived in. *Georgia* accomplishes that the old-fashioned way. ◀

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MUSIC

The Braxton boom

By Aaron Cohen

Saxophonist Anthony Braxton, long a leading exponent of perpetual innovation in jazz performance and composition, turned 50 this year. Braxton's milestone comes at the height of a remarkable boom in critical writing on his singular, and still-controversial, contributions to the evolving jazz canon.

Indeed, Braxton scholarship is blossoming into something of a cottage industry. Four perceptive and complementary studies of Braxton have appeared in the last few years. Braxton himself has penned—and privately published—his own three-volume work, a personal study of ethnomusicology called *The Tri-Axium Writings*. Meanwhile, Braxton continues to record at an astonishing rate: Roughly three new CDs under his leadership appear each year. The number of Braxton-led recordings will probably top 100 by the end of the decade. Last year, the MacArthur Foundation gave Braxton one of its "Genius" awards, elevating him to the top ranks of American arts and letters. As *Village Voice* critic Greg Tate has remarked, Braxton is "as interesting to think about as whole heaps of suckers are to groove to."

This efflorescence of interest in Braxton may strike some as critical bandwagon-hopping or, worse, a doting and belated tribute to a dynamic talent relegated to commercial obscurity. But in truth, Braxton's playing and writing exert enormous appeal because they synthesize virtually the entire scope of 20th-century music—European, African and Asian traditions as well as jazz—without turning the results into an intentionally disjointed pastiche of various forms.

When Braxton started recording more than 25 years ago, jazz was in a particularly turbulent state. In the late 1950s and early '60s, adventurous new talents such as Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor sparked the still-controversial free-jazz movement, which dispensed with conventional harmony and pulse. John Coltrane, the saxophone giant whose name is still cognate with the heights of jazz expression, died in 1967. The momentum for more high-wire modes of experimentation was beginning to shift overseas, with players such as British saxophonist Evan Parker leading the charge.

Still, as Braxton says in *Forces in Motion*, one important American outpost brought many of these disparate, inventive strands together; it was "the Chicago school who supplied the structural and scientific dynamics of what the revolution implied." The official name of the "Chicago School" was the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a collective founded on the South Side in 1965. The group stressed original compositions and experimentation in both performance and composition, particularly in the free-form manipulation of sound and silence. The AACM also provided free music education in the community. Some of the group's members espoused Afrocentrism long before it became fashionable; its black nationalist leanings were, in any event, widely misinterpreted by many critics. The collective's occasionally atonal performances also earned hostile receptions as foreboding, noisy experiments. Nevertheless, the AACM's survival over 30 years has only strengthened its core commitments and bears vital testimony to its ability to expand the possibilities of jazz improvisation.

Part of the group's resilience doubtless stems from its refusal to equate self-help with a confining parochialism. As Ronald M. Radano points out in *New Musical Figurations*, a critical appreciation of Braxton, the AACM allowed him to "follow his passions, to pursue openly and freely interests that would contribute to his creative ends." This led Braxton and his colleagues to study European avant-garde composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Noting the extent to which many commentators have treated such cross-pollination as an exotic novelty, Braxton told writer Graham Lock in *Forces in Motion*: "It's taken for granted that a European or European-American jazz musician has borrowed some aspects of African-American language: why should it be such a big thing that I learned from Europe? Why is it so natural for Evan Parker to have an appreciation of Coltrane, but for me to have an appreciation of Stockhausen is somehow out of the natural order of human experience? I see it as racist."

Whatever his

The Music of Anthony Braxton
By Michael Heffley
Excelsior Press, forthcoming
497 pp., $24.95

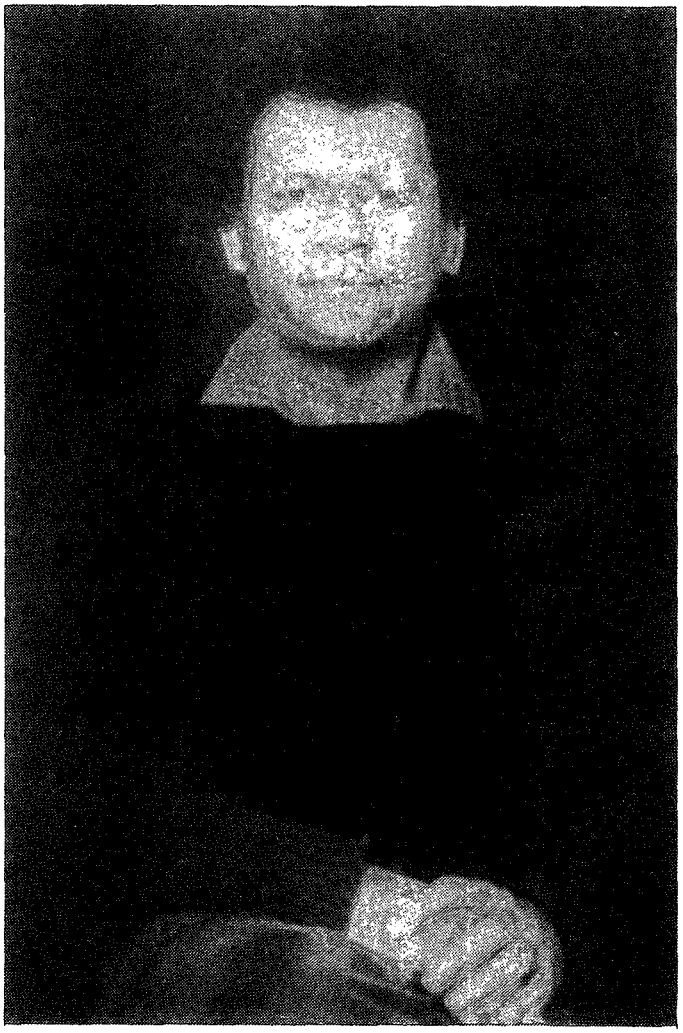
Forces in Motion: The Music and Thought of Anthony Braxton
By Graham Lock
Da Capo, 1988
412 pp., $13.95

Mixtery: A Festschrift for Anthony Braxton
Edited by Graham Lock
Stride Publications, 1995
269 pp., £11.95

New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique
By Ronald M. Radano
University of Chicago Press, 1993
315 pp., $16.95

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influences, Braxton has never been one to restrain the magnitude of his experiments. His 1968 album *For Alto* (Delmark) was a double LP of unaccompanied saxophone, an instrument that until then had rarely been heard a cappella for such an enduring stretch. Many of Braxton's later recordings would be similarly daring. *Creative Orchestra Music 1976* (Arista, reissued on CD by RCA/Bluebird) blended the big band format of Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus with John Philip Sousa-derived marches and shades of dissonance. Braxton's most recent opus, the four-disc *Wilsau (Quartet) 1991* (Hat Art), uses the ostensibly traditional quartet format for captivating results. The group's extroverted rhythms unpredictably stop and start as they communicate through an arcane code, with Braxton dexterously playing such underused reeds as the contrabass clarinet and sopranino saxophone.



Lock's *Forces in Motion* is an essential investigation of this enigmatic style. Since the author joined up with Braxton's quartet for an adventurous tour of the United Kingdom, the book (published in 1988) is also an endearingly funny narrative about the travails of performing modern jazz. And the lengthy interview transcripts reveal the intensely spiritual focus of Braxton's studies in musicology. Braxton feels that the ancient ritual uses of music offer important lessons from which the modern world can benefit. "Of course, we're riddled with entertainment in the West, which is not my idea of the highest use of creativity: but form as ritual could serve as the basis to involve participation with meaning, to establish a context to be able to deal with what we call God or the higher forces ... and it's certainly in accordance with the dictates of African dynamics and with those of early Europe, before the technocrats came."

Mixtery, which Lock edited, was published in honor of Braxton's birthday. The collection assembles writings from some of the world's most respected jazz critics and various musicians who have worked with Braxton. In a field that has often seen critics and performers at odds, this shared-focus festschrift is a notable rarity. Meanwhile, Michael Heffley, who assists Braxton in teaching ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University, has spun a 500-page epic out of his adulation of Braxton. *The Music of Anthony Braxton* draws on mysticism, numerology, the civilizations of ancient Africa, Greece and Rome. Even though his metaphors occasionally become exaggerated and unwieldy in ways that verge at times on the messianic, Heffley's labor of love brings a welcome, ambitious scale to the enterprise of jazz criticism.

Indeed, all these books conclude, each in its own way, that since Braxton draws on so many diverse sources in his own work, the universe can reasonably be included in the frame of reference for appreciating it. Hugo de Craen, a writer based in Antwerp, doesn't step too far out of bounds in comparing Braxton to Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky in *Mixtery*. This new body of Braxton scholarship also admirably refutes Barry Kernfeld's recent assertion in *What to Listen for in Jazz* that "no musician of overwhelming originality and creativity has dominated and redirected jazz since John Coltrane died in 1967." And not insignificantly, these books present, by force of example, an important lesson for interpreters of jazz: Just as Braxton helped dispense with obvious linearity in a solo, jazz writers will no longer have to adhere to a set critical scope.

Braxton himself has never questioned the importance of respect for tradition, as his recent tribute discs attest. But these documents do not equate enthusiasm with formalism or solemnity. On *Charlie Parker Project 1993* (Hat Art), a 10-CD performance of Bird's trademark tunes, Braxton accentuates bop's sharp corners with his own distinctive angularity. *Seven Standards 1995* (Knitting Factory Works—the flagship label of the New York club that hosted a weeklong Braxton festival in November) contains such standards as "Autumn in New York" and "These Foolish Things (Remind Me of You)," with Braxton playing piano. His keyboard excursions are lyrical, but more to the point, it clearly sounds like he's having fun. As well he should. ◀

Aaron Cohen is a freelance writer and regular contributor to *Down Beat* and *Coda*.

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IN PRINT

The devil you say

By Chris Lehmann

Is there any earthly use for the devil? Certainly the limited moral compass of the secular imagination can go haywire before the horrors of Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Nazi Germany—to say nothing of the countless everyday, small-scale atrocities that turn up regularly on the evening news. The chilling evidence of the evil that we do—the very stuff of history in our bloody century—seems to require that we acknowledge some permanent blot in the human soul, mocking our dreams of justice, equality, virtue and peace. People of good will can be forgiven for looking with a certain nostalgia upon the Evildoer, then. More than supplying a crude theological accounting for the vast panorama of human sins, the devil has a persuasive *feel* to him, a way of jibing with the evidence of the human experiment that often sadly eludes his theological opposite number.

There's no question, in any event, that Satan's star is rising: newsweeklies are marveling at his resurgence in values-minded opinion polls; the mythical epidemic of satanic ritual abuse places him at the center of an unholy alliance of Christian zealotry and recovery-movement therapy; he has oblique supporting roles in stylish Hollywood thrillers like *Seven* and *The Usual Suspects*; and he is attracting the attention of serious authors and publishers. This spring, Elaine Pagels, a renowned historian of early Christianity, published *The Origins of Satan*, an exploration of how the figure of the devil helped consolidate Christian orthodoxy—and solidify a durable Christian tradition of demonizing the true faith's earthly foes—amid the tumult of the Church's founding days. And just in time for Christmas, Harcourt Brace has reissued Alice K. Turner's 1993 book, *The History of Hell*, a lavishly illustrated tour of the inferno's various incarnations in Western literature and visual arts.

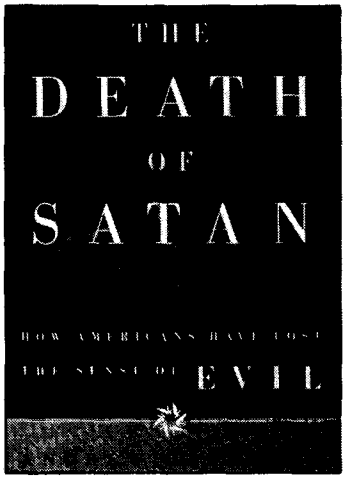
But the most sustained and interesting reckoning with Beelzebub's contemporary standing in American culture is Andrew Delbanco's *The Death of Satan*. Delbanco, a humanities professor at Columbia University, argues that while signs of his handiwork and celebrity continue to abound, Satan as a felt presence in America's moral imagination has been steadily on the wane since the Puritans arrived in the New World in the 17th century. And this is a trend that Delbanco—a self-described secular liberal—mourns, glumly pondering the intransigent reality of evil and the halfhearted modern (and postmodern) efforts to evade it with sundry therapies, political ideologies and relativist ditherings.

The historical scheme Delbanco furnishes is, in the tradition of our Puritan forbears, a tale of declension. In the theologies of early colonial and American religious thinkers such as Thomas Hooker and Jonathan Edwards, Satan was all the more vividly real for being a property of the believer's own inner self. In the tradition of St. Augustine's theology, evil was held to be, in Edwards' words, "what is negative, what is privative": a profoundly bereft sense of isolation from God's goodness that only God's grace could rectify.

In time, however, the devil, like most things in America, took a disconcertingly material form. Most notoriously the Salem witch trials of 1692-93 forced the intimate relation of Satan and soul out into the Puritan public square, and the mood of hysterical accusation the trials produced—together with their rising body count—prompted a guilty bout of introspection even among the most zealous accusers, such as Increase Mather, who later announced that the accusers at Salem, not the accused, were in the devil's thrall.

But it was too late, Delbanco writes; forced out into the light of day, Satan soon became the sport of early modern and Enlightenment skeptics, who ridiculed him as an atavistic icon of outmoded religious superstition. Indeed, the devil eventually suffered the vaguely patronizing fate of banishment to the remote corners of popular imagination, turning up in vaudeville shtick or the odd Mark Twain yarn. He was good for putting a scare in kids, but certainly not the sort of figure to inspire a Marlowe, a Luther or a Milton, let alone to lead the more sophisticated Americans of the incipient modern age to tremble for the fate of their immortal souls.

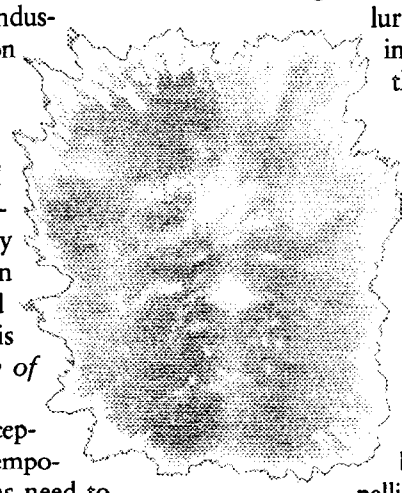
And by the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution, Delbanco writes, American culture suffered a much more devastating "loss of Providence" (since notions of absolute Evil and absolute Good always seem to march, and stumble, through history in dialectical tandem). The sense of mission that infused the Puritan errand into the wilderness and the early Republic's giddy—and bloody—crusade of Manifest Destiny were cruelly



The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil
By Andrew Delbanco
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
274 pp., $23

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uprooted. The Civil War, the country's great moment of reckoning with the sin of slavery and the first total war in human history, made the conceit of the nation's chosenness so empty as to seem nearly obscene; the nation's growing industrial order made the stuff of everyday life a remorselessly secular, calculating and hollow affair. The Puritan notion of a life's calling or spiritual vocation was supplanted by the grueling, regimented workweeks of industrial laborers—and the banal pursuits of the middling and professional classes. The new urban centers of industrial America were—much like Civil War battlefields—vivid testimony to the terrifying randomness of human events. And, as Delbanco notes, there was no comfortable place for sin—always a willful assertion of the self's claims over God's truth—in an industrial capitalist society that made the elevation of self a new religion.



Delbanco's rendering of Satan's decline and fall in America is, in other words, good, solid cultural history, strongly argued and carefully documented with critical and persuasive readings of religious and literary sources. Yet there is still the critical question of what we are now to make of the devil and all he implies in our own America, and it is here—the prescriptive heart of *The Death of Satan*—that the book falls strangely flat.

Seeking to tease out the Augustinian conception of evil as metaphysical absence in contemporary terms, Delbanco argues that Americans need to make evil cognate with ignorance. "Sin is finally best understood," he writes, "as a failure of knowledge—a lack, an obtuseness, a poverty of imagination." Yet ignorance seems an oddly bloodless notion to stand in for the once-chilling and fearsome figure of the Tempter. And this, moreover, is hardly the heyday for knowledge as a positive virtue. Voguish professors rush to equate it with tainted ideological power agendas; meanwhile, the vaunted "information revolution" remorselessly upends any firm grasp of knowledge with a tidal wave of decontextualized data. Without anything to counterpose ignorance to, the prospects for demonizing it seem slim indeed.

Where, then, can Americans find a vision of evil that squares with the facts? One obvious answer is that they already have. As Delbanco notes, American culture is awash in images of the demonic, however vulgar: American audiences clearly respond to popular genres and works that seek to resurrect a world in which something can be understood as unredemptively evil. Not merely do the gory titillations of horror films, slasher novels and Satan-hunting psychology indulge this impulse; the tribunals of daytime TV talk shows afford audiences the cheap catharsis of sitting in hectoring moral judgment of an endless parade of perpetrators and victims. Indeed, much the same dynamic reigns in spectacles such as the O.J. Simpson trial and the presidential election season.

The question is why these pop culture variations on the theme of evil continue to proliferate—and what about them Americans find so compelling. The point is not so much that these are degraded spectacles foisted on us by a perverse and debauched media, as Bob Dole, William Bennett and other tribunes of the right ritually intone. Nor is it that (as Delbanco argues) such entertainments expose liberal "naiveté" about human nature as a form of "moral prudery."

It is, rather, that these are the moralizing diversions vouchsafed to citizens inhabiting a largely depopulated public sphere. The effort to piece together reasonable debate over shared public goods such as political democracy, racial justice and economic equity is clearly exhausted, so the nation's moral imagination becomes trained on more immediate and lurid targets. It's far more satisfying to imagine that your neighbors are Satanists—or that a slasher lurks behind every placid countenance—than to reckon with the unwieldy evils of the welfare backlash or the new global economy. These incoherent forays into the republic of virtue are parodies of reasoned, moral judgment, of course, but they bear distressing witness to the profound isolation that feeds the craving for moral judgment in our culture.

For as our older theaters of public virtue empty out, Americans are thrown back upon themselves as the only compelling source of moral authority, and this is a prospect they properly regard with terror. The regnant political mythologies of our day—the free market and the multicultural arcadia—both mandate strict adherence to a callow relativism, which rarely rises above the radically subjective take on morality that analytic philosophers used to derisively call "emotivism." As a result, matters of good and evil have been consigned exclusively to the realm of private "lifestyle preference" and "value judgments," and hence made all that much more trivial.

In their own stifled manner, our contemporary imaginings of evil are a way of casting about to make us feel as though our actions and opinions matter again, to reclaim, even by force of negation, a purchase on questions of moral substance. It's an impulse we shouldn't scorn, for all the repellent forms it can take.

The sin in all this is not so much ignorance—the amorphous liberal foe of first resort in so many issues that concern so much more. It is, rather, something far more disquieting: the failure to create an enduring sense that our public life embodies a worthy good and even, at times, the promise of justice. Resuscitating Satan or conflating him with baleful, individual failings such as ignorance won't much avail when the barest conditions of shared moral judgment and civil debate elude us. It's no reproach to Delbanco's lively and compelling survey to point out that the largest vacuum in our cultural and political life surrounds not the question of evil but the reconstruction of the good. ◀

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Break a leg

By Leora Tanenbaum

The world of women's sports, one might expect, offers an untroubled path to empowerment: Women can compete on their own terms in a domain usually associated with men. Yet as is often the case in our culture, what one might expect is far different from the standard script of gender relations, which proceeds along a depressingly familiar arc.

Consider the exhaustively reported tabloid rivalry of figure skaters Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan. This melodrama (as well as fans' reactions to it) is the subject of a new collection of essays, *Women on Ice.* More than anything else, the book is an academically sanctioned excuse to rehash every detail of the skaters' costumes, music, makeup and body movements during that tortured winter of 1994, when the tire iron of Jeff Gillooly's co-conspirator met Nancy Kerrigan's knee.

At first glance, a 285-page book on the skaters' contretemps may seem a frivolous undertaking. But revisiting the whole affair brings back the many ways in which it signified struggles that extended far beyond the ice rink. As a colleague told editor Cynthia Baughman, "This is the Super Bowl for feminists."

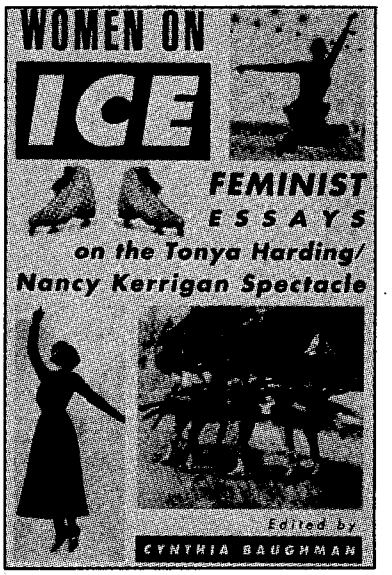
The contributors to *Women on Ice*, all aficionados of the forever up-and-coming academic discipline of cultural studies, scrutinize the Kerrigan-Harding wars in ways that have nothing to do with sports but everything to do with winners and losers in America. One contributor relates the rivalry between Harding and Kerrigan to the struggle between "victim" and "power" feminism, another to the mechanics of tabloid TV, and a third even uses the drama between the skaters as a point of departure to discuss post-Cold War politics. Some of the academic jargon is off-putting; when you pick up a book on Harding and Kerrigan, you don't quite expect discussions of the "narrative trope of sadistic domination."

But most of the contributors are a little more down to earth, sharing their fascination with the ways in which the skating rivalry defined the American dream of femininity and the battle between "good" and "bad" femininity. Kerrigan, white and upwardly mobile (those commercial endorsements bring in millions) with a long-limbed, graceful frame, was a stand-in for the idealized American woman. Fans sided with her against Harding because figure skating is "a beauty pageant on ice, a conflation of the talent and bathing suit competitions," say literary critics Robyn Wiegman and Lynda Zwinger.

Stacey D'Erasmo, a *Village Voice* editor, offers an even more caustic take on the beauty contest metaphor. "Figure skating, like the Miss America pageant, often resembles some peculiar, outdated girls' school dedicated to preparing its students for a world that doesn't exist. The code, rigidly enforced, appears to be obedience, inoffensive prettiness, wearing your skirts short enough but not too short, and smiling on bound feet."

Harding, it is agreed, could never achieve Kerrigan's high-class respectability, since her muscular build, trailer-park roots and truck-driving proclivities tainted her as "masculine." It made no difference that she was the superior athlete, capable of landing difficult jumps: "Femininity and athleticism are mutually exclusive concepts in American culture," comments musical theater historian Abigail Feder and, ironic as it may seem, they are diametrically opposed in many women's sports as well. Just as the well-muscled Bev Francis was deemed too masculine-looking by bodybuilding judges in *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, so, too, was Harding dismissed by Olympic judges who scorned her thick thighs and heavily applied makeup.

Samuel Stoloff, a Cornell graduate student in American studies, points out that even though both skaters come from similar economic circumstances, Kerrigan's background has been termed "blue-collar" while Harding's is popularly considered "white trash." Those who consider themselves blue-collar, Stoloff writes, desperately wish to maintain their distance from the "white trash," lest they join their ranks. "The more



Women on Ice: Feminist Essays on the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan Spectacle
Edited by Cynthia Baughman
Routledge
285 pp., $16.95

Little Girls in Pretty Boxes: The Making and Breaking of Elite Gymnasts and Figure Skaters
By Joan Ryan
Doubleday
243 pp., $22.95

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the blue-collar reality erodes in the 'post-industrial' United States, the more hysterically attached to the idea of the blue collar the middle class has become," says Stoloff. "Harding and Kerrigan represented competing middle-class fantasies of the poor: Harding the threatening fantasy of a resentful lumpenproletariat, something outside and beneath the national corpus, and Kerrigan the reassuring fantasy of the conservative, assimilationist blue collar."

But it was more than Kerrigan's physique and class status that earned her the Olympic silver medal. Most important, claims novelist Melanie Thernstrom, was her "complex mixture of strength and weakness." Cinderella, Thernstrom reminds us, was "young, orphaned and mistreated but in possession of certain inherent qualities [that assured] her eventual triumph." Likewise with Kerrigan, who only achieved popular celebrity after she was victimized. And, as with Cinderella, who was oppressed by her evil, wicked stepsisters, so too was Kerrigan whacked by a female rival. Although Harding was also the victim of abuse by her mother and stepbrother, she didn't fit into the Cinderella mold.

For this reason, most of the contributors to *Women on Ice* admit that they have a soft spot for Harding and brush aside her participation in the vengeful assault on Kerrigan. Only film and television critic Sandy Flitterman-Lewis is willing to confront Harding's crime: "Whatever stories one may compose in order to side with the (partial) perpetrator—from working-class sympathies to perverse notions of female assertiveness—the ugly, unadorned fact remains: a woman was violated in a way that we are now accustomed to seeing on television and another woman was, to some extent, involved in the attack." That most of the contributors neglect to analyze Harding's violent and desperate action is a testament to how far the field of cultural studies can stray from reality.

It's precisely the ugly reality of women's sports that concerns Joan Ryan, author of *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes*. Rather than dwelling solely on media images and "spectacles," her book exposes the abusive coaches and manipulative parents who mold young Kerrigans and Hardings in the first place. Ryan, an investigative sports reporter, scrutinizes how overtraining young girls results in gruesome physical injuries. She recounts the story of Elena Moukina, a Soviet gymnast who won the World Championships in 1978 and was pressured into training even when she was plagued by injuries. In 1980, on the eve of the Moscow Olympics, she attempted a tumbling trick and crashed to the mat, breaking her neck. She is now a paraplegic. Several years earlier, Moukina had told *International Gymnast* magazine that coaches prefer young gymnasts because they are obedient. "It is far easier," Ryan quotes her as saying, "to work with small, mute creatures who look at a coach as an idol and perform everything without ever talking back."

Unfortunately, U.S. gymnast Julissa Gomez, who began training with famed coach Bela Karolyi when she was 10, never learned Moukina's lesson. Karolyi would yell at her if she cried out in pain, even though the girl worked 40-50 hours a week in the gym. He bullied her into training after she had sprained a knee, belittling her and calling her stupid. As Ryan tells it, "fevers, chicken pox, broken bones and sprains were unacceptable excuses for missing practice." In 1988, at the age of 15, Gomez broke her neck as she performed on the vault at the World Sports Fair. Soon after, she slipped into a coma, and three years later she was dead.

But these spectacular tragedies are only part of the story. Ryan also relates horrifying tales of thousands of young gymnasts who develop eating disorders. In 1976, U.S. Olympic gymnasts were on average 17 and a half years old, 5 foot 3 1/2 inches tall, and weighed 106 pounds—practically Amazons by today's standards. In 1992, the average U.S. Olympic gymnast was 16 years old, 4 feet 9 inches tall, and weighed 83 pounds. No wonder that when 15-year-old gymnast Christy Henrich was 90 pounds and 4 feet 11 inches, she was desperate to lose weight. "A judge told me I'd never make the Olympic team if I don't lose weight," she explained. Losing weight, however, also means losing strength. When she fell on her head twice at the 1989 World Championships, Henrich's coach blamed the falls not on his overtraining nor on her weakened state but on his pupil's inconsistency.

Henrich continued to drop weight, even after she was unable to train. In June 1993, she weighed 52 pounds and "her skin was stretched tight across her bones like plastic wrap," as a chilling photo in *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes* attests. A year later she died of multiple organ failure.

Defenders of girls' gymnastics argue that Henrich and others who develop eating disorders are the ones to blame, not their coaches or parents; they're the ones, after all, who decide not to eat. But that's hardly the case. Most coaches feed their trainees very little while on the road, often as little as a thousand calories a day despite eight hours of daily training. And parents will go along with just about anything the coach says if it means getting a shot at international competition and lucrative commercial endorsements.

Ryan points out the heart of the abuse: Women's gymnastics and ice skating are increasingly the domain of little girls, not women. As soon as an athlete reaches physical maturity (something that inevitably afflicts even the best of them) she's over the hill. The reason why even Nancy Kerrigan failed to win the Olympic gold, after all, is that the leaner, lither and younger Ukrainian Oksana Baiul emerged. Indeed, this disturbing youth movement in women's sports is a key part of its attraction. As Ryan notes, the naive exuberance of the youthful athletes hearkens "back to a simpler time when girls were girls, when women were girls for that matter: coquettish, malleable, eager to please."

It's no wonder these sports have been likened to the Super Bowl. Just as that game reportedly causes an increase in domestic violence, so too do ice skating and gymnastics cause a similar kind of violence: the confinement of femininity. ◀

Leora Tanenbaum has written for *Ms.*, *The Nation* and the *Boston Phoenix*. She is a regular contributor to *In These Times*.

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SPEED READING

Diana: The Goddess Who Hunts Alone
By Carlos Fuentes
Translated by Alfred Mac Adam
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
218 pp., $22

In the last decade or so, Carlos Fuentes has accomplished an astonishing feat: He has become a caricature of himself, a sad reminder of the eclipse of Latin American fiction in the international arena. Once a commodity of the literary boom that began in the '60s, he now resembles a has-been diva who, her voice on the wane, nonetheless buries herself in cosmetics, thinking that everywhere she turns there's a spotlight.

Fuentes' newest novel in English, *Diana: The Goddess Who Hunts Alone*, is his most autobiographical yet. It traces the haunting love affair between a Mexican novelist and a self-destructive Hollywood actress named Diana Soren. Depicted as a wildly desired beauty, Soren is modeled after American actress Jean Seberg, with whom Fuentes had a brief but torrid love affair in 1969, when he was 41. On screen Seberg was always enigmatic, a nymphet who epitomized lust and volatility, and Fuentes doesn't waste a single drop of her mystique.

In his book the anonymous narrator, married but faithful only to his writing, is a self-described Don Juan, a feverish auteur in perpetual need of two sedatives: media exposure and Epicurean pleasure. Shortly after his first brief encounter with Soren-Seberg, they begin a relationship marked by insatiable carnal appetite. Trysting on location during the filming of a cowboy movie near the fictional city of Santiago, they explore the limits of passion until she proves too emotionally unbalanced. Soon she betrays him for a student, falls victim to an investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee, gets involved with a member of the Black Panthers, and finally—apparently like Seberg in real life—commits suicide.

But in spite of being drawn from such interesting material, Fuentes' portrait of Soren-Seberg comes off flat, mannered and unconvincing. As with most of his fictional women, Fuentes seems capable only of vilifying or glorifying his heroine: She serves either as his narrator's exclusive sexual object or as a mythical figure obsessed with earthly imperfections. Worse is the way in which the key events in Soren-Seberg's life are trivialized by the narrator's—and the author's—solipsism. Her tragedy unfolds amid the violence and rage of the American civil rights movement, but such a heady backdrop fails to distract the author from his twin obsessions, Mexican politics and his self-aggrandizing role within them. Fuentes spends most of the book dissecting, in thinly disguised form, his own literary career, studying his country's labyrinthine past and corrupt present and, in the novel's best passages, investigating the painful facts surrounding Mexico City's 1968 Tlatelolco Square massacre, in which Mexican soldiers opened fire on a crowd of student demonstrators, killing thousands.

In fact, the book seems little more than an excuse to discuss a thousand other topics, from Luis Buñuel to Fuentes' pompous magnetism as a lecturer at American colleges and universities. Fuentes, let's not forget, considers himself a direct descendant of Cervantes, Diderot and Laurence Sterne, and thus conceives the novel as a genre in which to recycle mass media messages, other people's ideas, and even library catalogues: No matter what you throw in, it can always find its right place in the mishmash.

Even borrowed stuff. Indeed, this view of the novel as an anything-goes artifact, a recurring handicap in Fuentes' work, has caused the author a bit of trouble lately. Late last August, Victor Celorio, a young Mexican novelist, sued Fuentes for stealing 110 sections of his 1986 novel *El unicornio azul*. The accusation made big headlines, and no sooner was the news available than a record of Fuentes' previous cases of plagiarism became widespread. Elena Garro, Octavio Paz's first wife, accused him of copying a short story by Adolfo Bioy Casares in his first collection of stories; Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the Cuban exile, claimed Fuentes had "rewritten" a screenplay he wrote under Fuentes' tutelage; and others also alleged that *The Old Gringo* was nothing but a revision of a chapter in Fernando Del Paso's *Palinuro of Mexico*, a brick-like book modeled after Cyril Connolly's *The Unquiet Grave*.

Even aside from the question of his liberal and unauthorized borrowings from other sources, Fuentes' literary reputation is clearly due for a serious reappraisal. Fuentes, in my view, is highly overrated. His frenetic writing has turned immodest and overdone. He has ceased to be a writer and has turned into performance, with every written or oral appearance displaying endless sparks of pretentious wisdom and cosmopolitanism. One shouldn't forget, of course, that Hispanic civilization in the New World was born and raised by imitation—mimicking, even parroting, whatever came from Europe. Modern languages and contemporary literary genres among Latin Americans are nothing but hand-me-downs, colonial borrowing from a reality far and away, copies used to insert the region into Western civilization.

Unfortunately, *Diana*, which begins with what looks like a promising novelistic idea, only ends up as one more display of excess, both stylistic and structural. Arrogant and derivative, Fuentes' pose as a Gargantuan man of letters, an all-devouring monster with an obsessive need to aggrandize himself and his creations, will always be a sobering lesson in the reproductive capabilities of the Hispanic world. ◀

—Ilan Stavans

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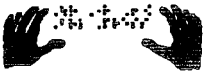
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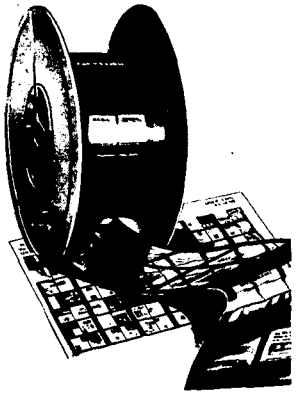
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back his can of Pepsi, so a fight breaks out and...

It's all supposed to be a hilarious send-up of '60s values, the utopian promise of rock dissolved over a can of soda pop. Inadvertently, the ad tells us more about why *The Beatles Anthology* was a sadder project than even the sight of those other middle-aged men—Paul, George and Ringo—communing over their much-heralded, long-gone past. Anyone born in or after 1969 couldn't really get the joke of the Pepsi commercial, just as anyone watching the *Anthology* would have had to experience the first round of Beatlemania to truly appreciate the show. Historical contexts and influences were glossed over; voiceovers of the Fab Four went unidentified. If you have to ask, you didn't really belong. If you *were* a fan, the program contained delightfully lengthy bits of concert footage and home movies, a mix that depended heavily on Boomer nostalgia and regret, accompanied by a healthy dose of cynicism: Even as you were wiping your tears over the vision of those impossibly hopeful years, the Pepsi commercial came along to remind you that your emotions were so much dust. Remember, "Nothing else is a Pepsi," not even the Beatles.



TV pundits observed afterward that, despite the hype, *The Beatles Anthology* captured barely a fragment of the audience ABC had hoped for. Young viewers stayed away in droves, but that was the point, wasn't it? The commercials weren't aimed at kids (who, by and large, have little use yet for a Ford Taurus or for Pepcid AC) but at the deeper pockets of their parents, who gave the program a respectable—if not dazzling—showing in the ratings.



It was an example of "narrowcasting"—the close alignment of media products and their demographic audience—at its best. And this, of course, is the very strategy that guarantees a phenomenon like the Beatles, whose enormously broad appeal made mincemeat of preconceived listening categories, won't come along any time soon. The kind of inventiveness the Beatles brought to mainstream rock is now largely confined to the margins, where the music splinters and divides listeners into a dozen sub-sub-categories of post-punk, rap, industrial or retro fans. Groups who aspire to a wider following play under the corporate logo and then sing about the inevitability of selling out.

Of course, these have been the facts of rock music for longer than you might care to remember. In the meantime, projects like the Rock Hall of Fame, PBS's fall series on the history of rock and ABC's *Beatles Anthology* trade on an older generation's plaintive cry that things were so much better then. The truth is, they probably were, but you'd never get anyone under 25 to believe it within the musty confines of these nostalgic time trips. The force behind rock that makes it matter deeply to ordinary people dies immediately when you present it as an artifact, treasured only for what it once meant, and only because someone can make a dollar from it. When a 15-year-old kid, picking through his parents' record collection, hears John Lennon screaming "Twist and Shout" for the first time, he'll either get what it means instantly or he won't. No one can manufacture the feelings that make that pleasure sublime in the first place.

The ghost of Lennon presides eerily over all these proceedings. The fact of Lennon's death went unmentioned through the six hours of *The Beatles Anthology*: It was as if he'd simply refused, in that difficult way of his, to partake in the whole business and gone off to do his own thing instead. Indeed, Paul McCartney, looking less these days like the boyish moptop and more and more like Angela Lansbury, still seems a bit miffed by the spell his old partner casts over the fans' imaginations: By turning himself into a martyred hero, John has been spared the thankless task of publicly aging. And in some inexplicably painful way, Lennon's absent presence is what makes these interminable rock eulogies bearable—you can only imagine what devastatingly witty cut he'd have for his cohorts' "reunion," or what outrageous act he'd plan in its stead. As it is, fans of rock can keep his memory as a talisman against acts of bad faith, and as a reminder of what rock is at its best—the promise of unencumbered freedom, a communal rallying cry, a thing that lives not in history but very much in the here and now. ◀

Linda DeLibero is a freelance writer based in Baltimore.

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Walrus 'R' Us

By Linda DeLibero





IN THE END

The local Borders is, like all Borders outlets, a monument to the restrained and civilized pursuit of consumer taste preferences, bathed in the sort of well-lit ambience that befits the franchised display of culture. But tonight the store's staff has turned up the music. The thrumming opening chords of "A Hard Day's Night" kick in, and suddenly every customer in the place (even some kids) begins unobtrusively to bounce, to whistle, to hum—a few even sing outright, remembering the lines as if it were 1964. Shooting shy glances of acknowledgment, strangers smile embarrassedly at each other before they turn back to their particular compartment: computers, history, travel. For a moment, in this bubble of upscale civility, the Beatles do what they always did best: make everybody feel as if they're in this together.

Of course, "this" constitutes something quite a bit different from whatever it was 30 years ago that made everybody sing; in 1995, we might call this sudden surge of nostalgia a Kodak moment. Indeed, Kodak was one of the primary sponsors of *The Beatles Anthology*, plugged for weeks on "ABeatlesC" and on countless magazine covers as the TV event of the decade. Along with Kodak, a host of corporate advertisers footed the bill for the six-hour, three-night extravaganza, including Ford ("making the dream come true"), the Novus Private Issue Card (personally designed by Ringo Starr) and Pepsi, which weighed in with a Kodak moment of its own. While the somewhat treacly strains of the Youngbloods' 1969 anthem "Get Together" waft from a diner jukebox ("C'mon people now, smile on your brother...."), two middle-aged delivery men, one for Coke and one for Pepsi, enjoy a brotherly moment of communion over their respective products. You see, because they both love the song they overcome their natural rivalry, but then the Coke guy won't give

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